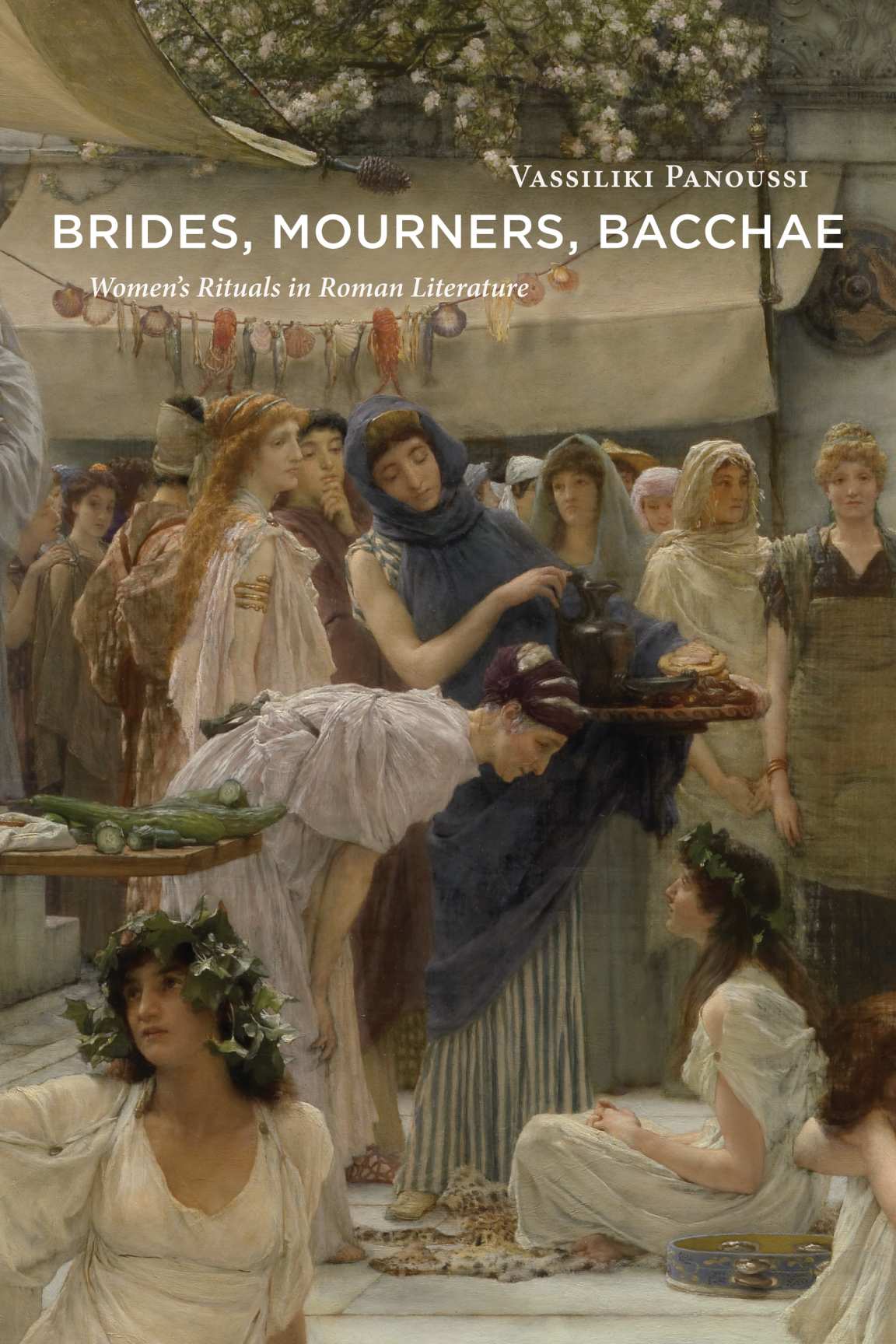

Vassiliki Panoussi

BRIDES, MOURNERS, BACCHAE

Women's Rituals in Roman Literature

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Brides, Mourners, Bacchae

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BRIDES, MOURNERS, BACCHAE

WOMEN'S RITUALS IN ROMAN LITERATURE

Vassiliki Panoussi

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For Kostas, Nikolas, Anna

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Catullus	Mynors, R. 1958. *C. Valerii Catulli carmina*. Oxford.
Livy	Walsh, P. G. 1999. *Titi Livi ab urbe condita: Libri XXXVI–XL*. Oxford.
Lucan	Shackleton Bailey, D. R. 1988. *M. Annaei Lucani De bello civili: Libri X*. Stuttgart.
Ovid, *Fasti*	Alton, E. H., Wormell, D. E. W., Courtney, E. 1997. *Ovidius, Fasti*. Stuttgart.
Ovid, *Metamorphoses*	Tarrant, R. J. 2004. *P. Ovidi Nasonis Metamorphoses*. Oxford.
Petronius	Müller, K. 2003. *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon reliquiae*. Munich and Leipzig.
Propertius	Heyworth, S. J. 2007. *Sexti Properti elegos*. Oxford.
Seneca	Zwierlein, O. 1986. *L. Annaei Senecae tragoediae*. Oxford.
Statius, *Achilleid*	Shackleton Bailey, D. R. 2003. *Statius, Thebaid, Books 8–12; Achilleid*. Cambridge, MA.
Statius, *Thebaid*	Hill, D. E. 1996, ed. *P. Papini Stati Thebaidos libri XII*. Leiden.
Valerius Flaccus	Ehlers, W.-W. 1980. *Gai Valeri Flacci, Setini Balbi Argonauticon Libros Octo*. Stuttgart.
Vergil	Mynors, R. 1969. *P. Vergili Maronis opera omnia*. Oxford.

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Adler	Adler, A. *Suidae lexicon I–V*. Leipzig, 1928–38.
CIL	*Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin, 1893–.
DServius	Thilo, G., and Hagen, H. *Servii Grammatici qui feruntur in Vergilii carmina commentarii*, 3 vols. Leipzig, 1881–1902.
FGrH	Jacoby, F. *Die Fragmente der grieschischen Historiker*, 15 vols. Berlin, 1923–1958.
FIRA	Riccobono, S. *Fontes Iuris Romani anteiustiniani*, 3 vols. 2nd edition. Florence, 1968–72.
ILLRP	Degrassi, A. *Inscriptiones Latinae liberae rei republicae*, 2 vols. Florence, 1957–63.
ILS	Dessau, H. *Inscriptiones Latinae selectae*. Berlin, 1892–1916.
L-P	Lobel, E., and Page, D. L. *Poetarum Lesbiorum fragmenta*. Oxford, 1955.
L&S	Lewis, C. T. and Short, C. *A Latin Dictionary*. New York, 1879.
LIMC	*Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae*. Zürich, 1981–99.
Lindsay	Lindsay, W. M. *Sexti Pompei Festi: De uerborum significatu quae supersunt cum Pauli epitome*. Leipzig, 1913.
LSJ	Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., and Jones, H. S. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Ninth edition. Oxford, 1940.
LTUR	Steinby, M. *Lexicon topographicum urbis Romae*, 6 vols. Rome, 1993–2000.
MW	Merkelbach, R., and West, M. L. *Fragmenta Hesiodea*. Oxford, 1967.
OCD	Hornblower, S., and Spawforth, A. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Third edition. Oxford, 1996.
OLD	Glare, P. G. W., ed. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. London, 1968–82.

PMGF	Davies, M. *Poetarum melicorum Graecorum fragmenta*. Oxford, 1991.
RE	Pauly, A., Wissowa, G., and Krolls, W. *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, 86 vols. Stuttgart, 1893–2000.
S-M	Snell, B. and Maehler, H. *Pindari carmina cum fragmentis*. Leipzig, 1987–88.
TrGF	*Tragicorum Graecorum fragmenta*, 5 vols. Göttingen, 1971–2004.

The consonantal *v* and *j* in the Latin texts have been printed as *u* and *i* and as *V* and *I* in capitals.

Abbreviations for Greek authors and works are according to LSJ; for Latin authors and works, according to the OLD, with a few exceptions for clarity. Any remaining abbreviations are from the OCD. Periodicals have been abbreviated according to *L'année philologique*. All translations are my own.

Brides, Mourners, Bacchae

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Introduction

Statius' incomplete *Achilleid*, written at the end of the first century CE, presents Achilles on the remote island of Scyros, wearing a dress, and confined to the company of young women. Achilles follows the girls in the performance of their duties, chief among which is participating in religious rituals. Achilles successfully passes as a girl for quite some time, even as he manages to get the king's daughter pregnant and even after the Greek warriors Ulysses and Diomedes arrive in Scyros with a mission to take him to the Trojan War. When Achilles finally reveals himself as a man, he does so by acting like a woman: he fawns over a beautiful shiny object (a shield).

Scholars have read Achilles' stint in Scyros as part of a larger narrative strategy that dramatizes his transition from adolescent boy to adult warrior. Yet a host of further questions emerges: Why did Statius choose to pit Achilles' extraordinary, overwhelming physicality against the girls' ritual performance, with the latter succeeding in overpowering it every time? How can the girls' ritual dances be capable of manipulating, delaying, and even thwarting the manifestation of Achilles' bursting masculinity? What cultural and gender ideals and beliefs render the girls' ritual activity a medium for the expression of female agency and power that imperils the successful correlation of masculinity with martial prowess, one of the most important indicators of male identity?

Powerful female characters pervade both Greek and Latin literature, even if their presence is largely dictated by the needs of narratives driven by men. Feminist approaches to the study of women in Greek literature have done much to illustrate the importance of their religious and ritual roles in public life. Latin literature, however, has not been subject to similar scrutiny. Yet women's religious and ritual roles as portrayed by Roman authors deserve a reevaluation in view of more recent work, which has begun to move beyond examining women's place within a given social hierarchy and to look into

alternative vehicles for female empowerment and oppression (Goff 2004, Parca & Tzanetou 2007). This book is the first systematic examination of representations of women's rituals in Latin texts and expands our awareness of the range of concerns in this body of literature in relation to religion, gender, and ideology. I argue that Roman authors consistently use women's religious agency to articulate broader concerns over issues of the individual's empowerment or disempowerment in their socio-political contexts. This tendency begins during the late Republic (the first century BCE) and continues with greater frequency through the first century CE and beyond. This is a particularly interesting time, as the Roman state was transitioning from a republic governed by aristocratic families to the one-man rule of the Principate. The imprint of these changes is inscribed in the literary texts, which construct and reflect identity in increasingly complex ways. My book argues that in the Roman literature of this period, there is an important dialectic taking place between women's imagined and actual access to public life. This dialectic elucidates both the extent and the scope of women's agency in literature. It also illustrates the importance of their contributions in the construction of the various facets of Roman identity and ideology by analyzing discrete and overlapping social, sexual, ethnic, and civic registers.

Roman women played important roles in private rituals (such as weddings and burials), while public ritual activities allowed them to participate in and contribute to the life of the city. Still, most scholars of Roman religion have traditionally argued that the role of women was peripheral to that of men (Scheid 1992, Beard et al. 1998). More recent work has shown that women participated in public rituals in important ways: their contribution was prominent in festivals, such as the Parentalia, a festival honoring family ancestors, and the wives of priests performed sacrifices as well as other significant religious tasks (Schultz 2006). Moreover, scholars of Roman religion have made a compelling argument for the centrality of some female priesthoods and cults, such as that of the Vestal Virgins, in Roman consciousness and for their importance to the Roman state (Wildfang 2006, Takács 2008). By contrast, the representations of women's rituals in Roman literature portray women's religious practice as more powerful than other historical records suggest. Most scholars interpret women's roles in literature as supporting patriarchal norms; given the marginality of women's sociopolitical status and the paucity of their own voices, religion emerges as perhaps the only arena that afforded them opportunities for exercising agency and authority.

This study is less interested in actual social practice. Instead it focuses on the ways authors use ritual as a "space" in which women become powerful agents who articulate a different point of view, one that is often ideologically opposed to that of both the men who populate their text and the men (authors, readers) for whom it was created.

Women's religious activity most prominently includes weddings and funerals; rituals restricted to women, such as those in honor of Bona Dea; and Bacchic rites, which, though they did not exclude male participation, were considered as falling primarily within the purview of females. For Roman authors, women's religious activity becomes a useful medium onto which ideological debates are mapped. In social practice, ritual usually asserts the status quo, yet in literature it often provides opportunities to challenge or even dismantle it: so, for instance in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 6, Bacchic rites are no longer a benign negation of male authority but result in the deaths of husbands and sons. I argue that Roman authors use ritual as a medium through which they contemplate alternative ideological propositions. Although those alternatives are often eventually suppressed or defeated, nevertheless they express notions of cultural identity that complicate or even oppose traditional Roman norms and suggest a more dynamic process of cultural and ideological formation than is indicated by previous analyses of women's roles in literature.

This book has developed from my previous work on representations of rituals in Vergil's *Aeneid*, which demonstrates that ritual is closely linked with issues of formation of civic identity and constitutes a site onto which ideological debates are mapped (Panoussi 2009). Exploring women's rituals within this framework provides a fresh perspective, challenging the traditional view of women as pawns of a patriarchal agenda. In addition, the results of my investigation will be useful to those interested in the historical record: literary authors do not exist detached from social, religious, and political systems and networks; thus they reflect the possibilities of female action inherent in these systems themselves. Lastly, the topic is particularly timely given the intense current cultural interest in gender identity, female empowerment, and the institution of marriage.

The question of what ritual is is a fraught one. In this study, I use the term to denote the array of cultural practices and behaviors linked to religious belief and constituting established custom through recurring periodic performance. Since we have no access to actual performances of Roman rituals, our knowledge of them is always mediated through text or the visual record,

which are constrained by the strategies and demands of representation. As a result, ritual representation is a precarious source for extrapolating religious belief or reconstructing religious practice. Both rituals and ritualized acts are the body of evidence under examination. When investigating wedding rites, for instance, I consider not only aspects of the religious ceremony that unite the bride and groom but also the entire ritualized context, that is, the dressing of the bride, the signing of the legal contract, the *deductio* ceremony, the singing of epithalamia, and all other activities that constitute what we understand as Roman wedding customs. As a series of formulaic or repeated practices associated with but not restricted to religious life, ritual is a useful analytical tool, which helps illuminate the interrelationships of religion, society, and culture.

In his important book *Literature and Religion in Rome*, Denis Feeney subscribes to the now established view that, far from being excessively formalistic, devoid of emotional impact, originality, and collective significance, Roman religion is an area where dynamic and even revolutionary cultural processes take place (1998: 3). He argues that religious elements in Roman literary texts are part of larger cultural practices "interacting, competing, and defining each other in the process" (1998: 1–2). For Feeney, then, Roman literature is a unique lens through which we can see the dynamic nature of Roman religion, reproducing, assimilating, or transforming the religious beliefs and practices it encounters. Feeney's analysis advocates for attention to the multiplicity of meanings of religious representation and highlights how these can illuminate the host of cultural and ideological processes taking place in literary texts.

In this light, my work proposes that the intersection of ritual and gender offers a valuable framework within which we can analyze and understand these processes. In addition, my study pays particular attention to what differentiates texts, namely their historical and social contexts. The bread and butter of my methodology includes close literary readings of these narratives, as well as an examination of their interactions with their Greek and Roman predecessors. By concentrating on literary representations of ritual, I focus on the plurality of meanings that it can generate for its actors and its audience(s); on its importance for the articulation of gender roles; and on its intimate relationship with structures of power—divine, political, or social. This approach reveals Roman gender categories that are more malleable and contested than we thought and demands that they be resituated within the larger cultural, historical, and social context.

Although ritual has been widely used as an analytical tool to understand culture, society, ideology, and religion, it has also been an object of study in its own right. Catherine Bell's work has been influential in articulating the need to explore "what makes us identify some acts as ritual, what such a category does for the production and organization of knowledge about other cultures, and how we might assess the assumptions that create and constrain the notion of ritual" (1992: 4). In this book, I examine ritual using Bell's theoretical framework, which identifies it both as a category describing an array of practices and as a method of cultural interpretation (1992: 13–17).[1]

Accordingly, we should view ritual not as paradigmatic but as one of many categories of social praxis (Bell 1992: 7). Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* as it relates to ritual is important in understanding some of the distinctive qualities of ritual *qua* social praxis (Bourdieu 1977: 72–95; Bell 1992: 78–80). One of the constituent elements that make up *habitus*, and one that is important for this study, is the socially acquired "sense" of ritual. The term comprises the ways members of a group intuitively know what constitutes an acceptable version of a wedding, a burial, and so on, without necessarily always agreeing about its performance or its meaning. To summarize this complex argument here, it is sufficient to note that for Bourdieu, the symbolic system that makes the sense of ritual possible is characterized by fluidity and ambiguity. "The fact that symbolic objects and practices can enter without contradiction into successive relationships set up from different points of view means that they are subject to *overdetermination through indetermination*" (1977: 110, emphasis in original). In other words, the symbolic system of ritual allows an array of practices to coexist, even as they originate from or inhabit other symbolic spheres. So, for example, the concept of food holds pride of place in ritual as an appropriate offering to the gods, while in an equally unproblematic way coinhabiting a host of other symbolic spheres: for example, the domestic, agricultural, and commercial. Ritual's fluidity, full of indeterminacy, ambiguity, and equivocation (Bell 1992: 83), allows it to encompass a vast array of practices and attitudes toward these practices. In this light, we can begin to appreciate, for instance, to what extent Catullus' description of Roman wedding rites conform to or diverge from other representations. Rituals themselves, and in our case, their literary representations, "generate distinctions between what is or is not acceptable ritual" (Bell 1992: 80). What is more, analyzing these distinctions, manipulations, and appropriations illuminates how texts structure social and gender dynamics.

Ritual has also been characterized as a form of social control, but recent research has shown that its relation to power is more complex than was previously realized. Ritual is a strategy that helps certain social groups limit the power of other individuals or groups by accepting and maintaining a status quo grounded on belief and practice. This is achieved through a mutual misrecognition of the mechanisms that permit the exercise and propagation of power. As Bell shows, ritual simultaneously involves consent and resistance, misunderstanding and appropriation. When we analyze ritual performances or ritualized ways of acting, we explore negotiations of authority, self, and society (1992: 8). Accordingly, it is important to recognize that ritual is a locus where social control is exercised as well as one where competing beliefs and other cultural processes of social change occur, along with cultural transformations and appropriations. Rituals and ritualized acts are very much concerned with power, constituting a dynamic space where power relations can be both articulated and challenged. More broadly understood, then, ritualization is a cultural process that seeks to legitimize power relations but may also contain the seeds for social change (Bell 1992: 169–70).

My work does not examine ritual practice that is unmediated through text. As cultural artifacts, literary texts reflect, reproduce, and negotiate social protocols, political structures, and ideological beliefs. While literary ritual representations contain information on actual practice, they are not, as Feeney has shown, manuals of ritual performance. Likewise, we cannot use the information they provide to reconstruct a prototypical ritual action, because such action does not exist (Feeney 1998: 115–21). Moreover, even if the purpose of a text is to describe a rite, it would never be able to communicate the host of meanings generated by its performance. It is thus more productive to examine ritual as a space where the production of knowledge occurs. As a result, my analysis of literary representations of rituals involving women concentrates on instances where their action diverges from the social and religious norms that demand their exclusion from the spheres or war, public life, positions of authority, or social and sexual dominance. Since ritual dictates, but does not completely control, the misrecognition of the sources of power structures, it constitutes fruitful ground for the exploration of consent, resistance, and negotiated appropriation (see also Bell 1992: 207).

Participants have the ability to shape in important ways the power relations that a ritual may purport to uphold. Participants, however, are not blank slates on which power dynamics are inscribed or projected, but may choose to accept certain aspects of a ritual while resisting others. "A participant, as

a ritualized agent and social body, naturally brings to such activities a self-constituting history that is a patchwork of compliance, resistance, misunderstanding, and a redemptive personal appropriation of the hegemonic order" (Bell 1992: 208). The idea of negotiated consent is thus particularly helpful in studying Roman representations of female religious experiences. In the texts under discussion, women repeatedly manipulate rituals to pursue their own agendas, renegotiating power relations or facilitating processes of cultural transformation.

The previous analysis on the definition and function of ritual inevitably raises the question "what is agency and how is it constituted?" Agency is the subject of considerable debate in philosophy, sociology, cultural studies, and social cognitive theory, among other disciplines. Agency is usually defined as the capacity of a human to act by making a choice in order to produce a particular result. Anthony Giddens and Margaret Archer define agency in terms of an actor's "reflexivity": we are agents when we consciously choose one course of action in circumstances where we could have chosen another (Archer 2000, 2003; Giddens 1979, 1984; Burkitt 2016: 323). Agents, however, do not act alone. Giddens' theory of structuration demonstrates that social structures, systems, traditions, rituals, and so on constrain human action. For Giddens, agency and structure are intertwined and cannot be separated from one another. Agency both reproduces social structure and can lead to social change. A frequent criticism of this view is that it regards agency as a possession of individuals and "structure" as external.

More recently, relational sociology has defined agency by taking into account "the embodied, emotional, interdependent forms of relating in which reflexivity develops and is enmeshed" (Burkitt 2016: 330). Scholars thus define agency as *interaction*, claiming that individuals always relate directly to one another in different forms of social relations (Burkitt 2016, Emirbayer & Mische 1998). In this view, we never confront social structure as single individuals, because we are always part of some type of social relations, either interpersonal, such as those with family and friends, or more impersonal, such as those in work, economics, and politics (Burkitt 2016: 331). Since these relations are constantly fluid and ongoing, we are always acting upon others and being acted upon by them to varying degrees. As a result, "one's actions are rarely one's own, and rarely for one's own sake only, for agency is pulled, pushed, harmonized, agitated, coaxed, pleaded . . . by multiple bonds" (Pham 2013: 37). Put differently, individual agency and freedom to pursue a particular course of action exist, but only up to a point.

How does such a concept of agency inform my readings of Roman literary women? The story of the Lemnian princess Hypsipyle may serve as a case in point. Hypsipyle belongs to two social groups—the royal family and the women of Lemnos—that come into conflict with each other. She negotiates this conflict by participating in the uprising against the men while finding an effective way to rescue her father. Hypsipyle's agency is thus determined by her relationship with these two groups and by the various responsibilities she feels towards them. This "bonded agency," however, results in her diverging from both groups: she rejects the group's solution (which is to slaughter all men), and, in orchestrating her father's rescue, she reverses the normative imbalance of power between them. Hypsipyle's relational bonds with her father, the other women of Lemnos, and the religious system at once enables and constrains her independence. Hypsipyle assumes agency in making a decision to act a certain way, although this agency is not disengaged from her bonds with the various social groups to which she belongs. Moreover, she does not necessarily aim to overthrow these social systems (political, familial, religious), yet her actions endow her with religious authority and political power.

As the previous example indicates, the concept of agency in this book goes hand in hand with that of gender. Michel Foucault's writings have greatly influenced the study of sexuality and gender in classics. In his *History of Sexuality*, Foucault demonstrated that historical conditions make the various types of subjectivity possible (McHoul & Grace 2002: 91) and argued that sex is defined and produced by complex interactions of discourse and power (Butler 1999: 131; Foucault 1978: 17–35). Foucault also influentially argued that ancient Greek and Roman culture classified sexual practices around the concepts of active and passive, where active was equated with the male and passive with the female (1986: 47; McHoul & Grace 2002: 97).[2] Moreover, modern feminist discourse has been influenced by Judith Butler's work (1999), which has expanded our definitions of gender and of what constitutes gendered behavior and discourse. Her approach reveals gender as a fluid category which calls into question both the dominant heterosexual frame and the behaviors and discourses associated with it. In this way, Butler's work draws attention to the ways in which championing particular expressions of gender may in turn produce new forms of hierarchy and exclusion (Butler 1999: viii).

More recently, sociologist Quynh Pham has examined agency and gender through the prism of "bondedness" mentioned above. Following Foucault's

and Butler's work, as well as that of relational sociologists, Pham uses as examples the women's mosque movement in contemporary Egypt and Ho Xuan Huong's folk poetry in eighteenth-century Vietnam. In these contexts, she argues, "despite their seemingly opposite expressions of agency, women . . . endure . . . and negotiate their conditions of bondedness while envisioning self-fulfillment from within, not beyond, the entanglements of power, sociality, and divinity, that shape their existence" (Pham 2013: 42–43). Calling into question what she terms the "Western" concept of freedom as autonomy, she identifies a series of mutually binding social, personal, religious, and other relationships that can affect agency in different ways and can express different views from that of the dominant ideology. Pham asks, "Can we imagine ways of acting that do not aim to uproot settled norms and at the same time do not merely reinscribe them either? Or ways of acting that defy or surpass existing rules without necessarily striving to re-order the cultural conditions of being?" (2013: 34).

These articulations of gender and agency inform my book's larger argument that Roman women were able to find empowerment within ritual. In my analysis, I often refer to *empowerment* to describe women's laying claim to structures of authority or power usually associated with the male domain. As with women in other traditional societies, Roman women's agency was strictly circumscribed by familial, social, religious, and civic norms and structures.[3] Embedded as they were in these systems, however, Roman women are often represented in literature as engaging in action that defies the norms and expectations dictated by these structures. Women are shown to assert their personal desire or communal code of ethics over those of the men, sometimes championing the dominant ideology where the men have failed it, other times by openly defying it. In acting in this way, they do not always necessarily aim to effect social change, although they do end up expressing alternative roles for themselves by simply forcing structures to expand beyond their normative capacity. For example, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 9, Telethusa's religious identity as a worshipper of Isis enables her to disobey the orders of her husband to expose and kill their daughter. Yet her empowerment is motivated by her status as both a mother and a worshipper/priestess of a fertility goddess, and never negates the familial structure altogether. This empowerment, however limited, creates multiple problems that touch on both familial hierarchies and definitions of gender. The poem solves these problems through divine intervention, a device that exposes the thorny nature of Telethusa's choice while simultaneously sanctioning it.

Feminist classical scholars have long demonstrated that Roman authors regularly manipulate problems relating to gender in order to delve into the workings of the social fiber by comparison and contrast (Skinner 1997), especially in cases where the individual engages against established gender roles, social hierarchy, or normative ideology. Though ancient Greek and Roman societies do not fall as neatly into what Butler calls the "heterosexual normative frame," their texts still mostly define gender roles as binary. The women who resist or defy gender-normative behaviors are seen as encroaching on male domains. I argue, however, that the religious context, which allows women to enact these transgressions, provides an alternative space for the "performance of femininity" that includes behaviors and actions that are otherwise deemed transgressive. As such, they sometimes offer a new articulation of gender and, by extension, of social relations that go against the male/female binary. Ritual gives women the space to enact their gender differently from other social contexts. In other words, ritual presents additional ways of studying gender in Rome.

For example, Petronius' Quartilla adopts the male attribute of sexual aggression, while the men she dominates are cast as feminized. The portrait of a *cinaedus* in the same passage, however, destabilizes the equilibrium of this reversal. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 9, Iphis briefly contemplates wedding as a fluid enough institution to admit her same-sex union with Ianthe. Statius' Hypsipyle both transgresses prescribed gender roles and repurposes the cultural significance of Bacchic rites from destructive to nurturing. In other cases, male heroes, such as Orpheus or Hercules, encroach upon the female domain and are themselves punished, ridiculed, or feminized. In these literary texts, and in many others, the traditional gendering of culture does not necessarily obtain. Ritual emerges as a space where women can lay claim to gender fluidity, even if the gender binary is eventually not challenged but affirmed.

This culturally informed analysis transforms our understanding of these ritual representations, as they relate to their narrative agents and audience in new ways. My readings also illuminate the literary strategies behind the use of female rituals. They contribute to our appreciation of their effect on the intended audience's perceptions of gender identity (male and female) and its relationship to ideology.

The book is divided into four thematic sections: "Brides," "Mourners," "Bacchae," and "Women-Only Rituals." Each of these privileges literary repre-

sentations of one type of ritual but offers extensive discussion of others, since in most literary works, women's rituals are cast as fused or overlapping with various other rites. So in Statius' *Achilleid*, the girls of Scyros perform rituals that involve both choral dancing (more typical of archaic Greece) and Bacchic rites (conforming to the Bacchic mysteries that were popular in Rome); in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 10, Eurydice's wedding to Orpheus is described as a marriage that turns into a funeral; in *Metamorphoses* 9, a successful ritual supplication of Isis provides a happy ending to Iphis' love for another woman (by transforming her into a man) and thus ensures the integrity of Roman wedding ritual. In addition, since Roman authors routinely mobilize a network of allusions to Greek literary works, engagement with representations of Greek rituals in both the Roman texts and their Greek models is also necessary. In each chapter, my analysis first seeks to illuminate how religious activity results in female empowerment in the text. It then proceeds to contextualize the role of this type of empowerment in its generic context, as well as its ideological, social, or metapoetic agenda.

The texts chosen here are by no means an exhaustive list, and I hope they will serve as points of departure for further study. In some cases, works or episodes analyzed are fundamental for our understanding of the ritual practice in question, such as Catullus' epithalamia (for weddings), Livy's narrative (for Bacchic mysteries), or Ovid's *Fasti* (for the festival of the Matralia). Other times, the texts under examination present a particularly interesting exploration of women's religious activity that has not received much attention by critics, such as Orpheus' death at the hands of the Ciconian women, Hypsipyle's rescue of her father in Valerius, or Isis' presence in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. By contrast, some of the most famous texts in the canon of Roman literature have not been explicated from the point of view of ritual and gender, such as the case of Philomela in Ovid or Propertius 4.9. In other cases, the intersection of women and ritual is so prominent both for the work itself and for the canon of Roman literature more generally that inclusion in this book is necessary. Statius' *Thebaid* has pride of place in this regard, because of his treatment of both Hypsipyle and the women's burial rites at the end of the poem.

Furthermore, my book aims to demonstrate the centrality of women's rituals in a significant portion of the classical canon. As a result, it is important to include works from all major periods, and both poetry and prose. In the Neronian period, Lucan's *Civil War* and Seneca's *Trojan Women* present women venturing into the male arena of war through their role as brides. In

the case of prose texts, an additional goal is to provide arguments against either relying on them too greatly or dismissing them too cursorily. My analysis provides further evidence regarding the difficulties of extracting historical evidence from Livy's Bacchanalian narrative; it also makes the case that Petronius' *Satyrica* should not be discounted as mere parody, because even parody can reveal prevalent ideas regarding women's religious activity.

Lastly, in a book dedicated to women's rituals, the section comprising rituals exclusive to women may perhaps seem sparse. The paucity of texts describing such rituals and the general air of mystery surrounding them are the main culprits. The texts in this section engage with these rites more extensively than others. In each case they juxtapose women-only rituals with male rites: in Propertius 4.9, Bona Dea opposes Hercules; *Fasti* 6 emerges as an alternative foundation narrative to that of *Aeneid* 8; and Statius' *Achilleid* constitutes an ambitious response to Homer (and Vergil). Two more points of *apologia*: first, the book does not treat Vergil's *Aeneid*, because the topic was covered extensively in my previous book (Panoussi 2009: 115–73). Second, magical ritual, an area where ancient women excel, is similarly absent because it is a topic so vast and complex that it constitutes a category of its own.

The first section, "Brides," demonstrates that weddings are an important vehicle for the construction of Roman gender and national identity. The second chapter examines how the wedding hymns of Catullus (poems 61 and 62) portray sexuality as a force at work for the benefit of society and state. Chapter 3 considers how in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 9 the foreign goddess Isis empowers women to question the gender hierarchies that marriage prescribes, as well as the categories of male and female, Roman and foreign. Chapter 4 focuses on civil war and its effects on women's lives in Lucan's *Civil War* and Seneca's *Trojan Women*. Civil war distorts wedding rituals and links them to the disintegration of familial, social, and political relations. Women, however, are portrayed as the only agents in control of their own destruction, which is cast as an ideologically charged choice. The next chapter explores Quartilla's wedding rites honoring the phallic god Priapus in Petronius' *Satyrica* as a medium through which the voracious female sexual appetite is given free rein and threatens the integrity of male sexuality and identity. Associations between Quartilla and Nero reveal women's role in this instance as representing the emperor's absolute power over his subjects.

In "Mourners," we see that women's ritual role in burials directly implicates them in state affairs. The power afforded to women through their par-

ticipation in burials is emphatically affirmed in Orpheus' story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 10, where the greatest of poets usurps the female role of mourner only to be destroyed in turn by women (chapter 7). In chapter 8, Statius' *Thebaid* has women's rituals either mirror the devastation caused by civil war or offer the only hope for reconciliation and peace.

"Bacchae" explores Bacchic activity as championing female resistance to male authority. Chapter 10 argues that the historian Livy, in his narrative of the scandal of the Bacchanalia of 186 BCE, presents female Bacchic activity as potentially pernicious to the moral health of family and society and identifies a discrepancy between state ideology and social practice with regard to homosexuality. The next chapter explains the use of Bacchic ritual as showcasing female resistance to an abusive male: in the story of the rape of Philomela in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 6, Philomela and her sister Procne are empowered to turn against the rapist Tereus partly through the performance of Bacchic rites. Chapter 12 studies the intersection of the familial and the political, as Hypsipyle rescues her father from slaughter by faking Bacchic rites in both Valerius' *Argonautica* and Statius' *Thebaid*.

"Women-Only Rituals" investigates how rituals restricted to women are used to correlate the fragility of male identity to the problem of generic integrity in poetic works. Chapter 14 argues that Hercules' confrontation with the priestess of Bona Dea (in Propertius 4.9) implicitly endorses an ideology of inclusion while also enacting a metapoetic conflict between the genres of elegy and epic. Chapter 15 examines the role of the cult of Mater Matuta in Ovid's *Fasti*, where the Roman *matronae* emerge as foundational figures analogous to Aeneas. The final chapter focuses on Achilles' cross-dressing in Scyros to show how similar generic tensions are also interconnected with questions surrounding the stability of male identity. Ritual, literature, and ideology all intersect to create a complex mosaic within which women occupy a prominent space and provide an impetus to explore not only established notions regarding gender and power in society but also anxieties concerning the construction of self, male and female, in the Rome of the first centuries BCE and CE.

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PART I

BRIDES

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The Roman Wedding

Our current understanding of the Roman wedding and Roman marriage has been considerably enhanced by two comprehensive monographs (Treggiari 1991; Hersch 2010). Each of these presents evidence and offers interpretations of it, arriving at sound conclusions regarding, among other things, the particulars of the wedding ceremony, the legal status of the married couple, and the social, political, and philosophical ideas surrounding the institution.

For the purposes of this study, in this chapter I offer a summary of our knowledge regarding the Roman wedding ceremony, paying particular attention to elements that occur frequently in the wedding narratives under examination in this book.[1] Authors seem to dwell on these elements partly because they are emblematic of the ceremony, partly because they can be put to fruitful use to serve narrative strategies and goals.

Many sources—literary, philosophical, and antiquarian—report that before the wedding day, omens were sought (Treggiari 1991: 164; Hersch 2010: 116–17) and sacrifices were made to the gods (mainly Juno but also Ceres, Tellus, and even Bacchus).[2] Festivities on the day of the wedding included dressing the bride.[3] She wore a tunic (*tunica recta*) fastened by a girdle (*cingulum*), which was tied in a complicated Herculean knot (to be untied by the bridegroom).[4] Her shoes were orange slippers (*lutei*). Her hair was combed into six braids (three on either side of the head). A spear that had shed blood (*hasta caelibaris*) was used to part the bride's hair.[5] Woolen fillets (*infulae*, *uittae*) fastened the coiffure, while a garland (*corona*) was placed on top of her head. An important garment of the bridal attire was the *flammeum*, a yellow veil, which was decorative as well as protective against the evil eye, that is, the gaze of those who wished her harm (Hersch 2010: 132).[6]

For the marriage to be legally binding, both spouses had to be Roman citizens of sufficient age, and lacking a close blood relationship.[7] The consent of each party was required. If either of them was *in patria potestate*, then the

consent of the *paterfamilias* or appointed guardian was required as well. Consent could be spoken (verbal agreement), written (signing a marriage contract), or tacit (the presence of the guardian or parent at the wedding).[8] During the ceremony, the signing of the marriage contract (*tabulae nuptiales* or *tabulae dotales*) was ratified. It contained details of the dowry and an agreement about what would happen to it in the event the marriage ended. The contract was read aloud in the presence of guests, and the witnesses took turns attaching their seals to the dotal tablets (Treggiari 1991: 165)—an important moment in the ceremony. While the contract was not essential for the legality of the marriage, it was symbolic of the joining of the couple (Treggiari 1991: 165; Hersch 2010: 122).

Although in ancient Rome a religious ritual was not necessary for the marriage to be legal,[9] the importance of the religious elements of the wedding ceremony as markers of the couple's union was paramount. For example, there is evidence of a ceremony taking place that is called *confarreatio* (sharing of *far*, i.e., spelt) and in which certain solemn words were pronounced in the presence of ten witnesses (Hersch 2010: 25). This type of ceremony does not appear to have occurred after the end of the Republic. Yet some formulaic phrases were spoken in other types of probably nonreligious wedding ceremonies, one of which is *ubi tu Gaius, ego Gaia* (where you are Gaius, I am Gaia).[10] The element that receives most mention, however, is the carrying of torches, which becomes synonymous with the entire ceremony and with the marriage itself.

The gesture of joining the right hands of the spouses during the wedding (*dextrarum iunctio*) is frequently represented in art as an important moment in the ceremony (Treggiari 1991: 164–65). One of the participants in the wedding, the *pronuba* (a woman who had been married once and whose husband was still living), joined the couple's hands (Treggiari 1991: 164, 314; Hersch 2010: 190–99). In literature, pledging faith by clasping hands is often mentioned in the context of weddings but also in other contexts, such as the forming of alliances.[11] Hersch (2010: 190–212) extensively discusses both literary and artistic sources for this gesture. She argues that the evidence from literature is not as clear as it is in art, noting that the only source unambiguously referring to *dextrarum iunctio* as part of a wedding ritual is in an epithalamium by Claudian (fourth century CE).[12] According to Hersch (2010: 205), the gesture was an important metaphor symbolizing the union of the couple, but from our available evidence we cannot conclude for certain that it was a defining moment in the wedding ceremony.

After the ceremony, the bride took part in a procession, the *deductio*, in which the couple's relatives and wedding guests took her to her new home, usually the husband's house. This procession was such a prominent feature of the wedding that the term *uxorem ducere* came to mean *to marry*. The procession was conducted by torchlight, and these torches (*taedae*) stood as a symbol for the wedding as a whole. They were also used to decorate the groom's house and provided light for the ensuing feast (Treggiari 1991: 163; Hersch 2010: 138–40). There was musical accompaniment, and the guests cried *hymen hymenaee* or *Talasio* (Treggiari 1991: 166). The bridegroom did not take part in this procession, as he had already gone back to his house to welcome the bride. During the *deductio*, the *fescennina iocatio* took place. Although the precise origin of the name and the practice remain obscure (Fedeli 1983: 86), it is certain that a group of young men sang obscene jokes at the expense of the groom. It seems that the groom himself was involved in the singing of the fescennine verses and that he threw nuts to the crowd as the procession reached his house (Treggiari 1991: 166, Hersch 2010: 151–58). The ritual custom of *raptio*, no longer practiced by the middle of the first century BCE, occurred at the beginning of the *deductio*. In the *raptio*, according to our sources (Fest. 364 Lindsay; Macrob. *Sat*. 1.15.21), the members of the *deductio* pretended to snatch the girl from her mother's arms. The rite was thought to commemorate the first Roman marriage, the rape of the Sabine women (Fedeli 1983: 53).

When the bride reached the groom's house, she anointed the doorposts with oil or fat and adorned them with woolen fillets. She was then lifted over the threshold by her attendants. As soon as she entered her new home, the bridegroom offered her fire (a torch) and water (in a vessel). The sharing of fire and water (*aquae et ignis communicatio*) was an important gesture in Roman consciousness, since these elements were deemed necessary for survival. Indeed fire and water were denied to an exiled citizen (Treggiari 1991: 168). Thus the welcoming of the bride in her new house is analogous to the protections the state affords its citizens.

As the bride and groom retired to their bedroom, the wedding guests or choruses of young men and women sang wedding songs. Most extant wedding songs (called *epithalamia,* from the Greek term for this genre of poetry) mention the god of marriage, Hymenaeus, whose presence was deemed necessary to ensure a happy union.

Scholars are unclear about the importance of this deity. Some posit that his significance is emphasized only in poetry, a result of Greek, specifically

Alexandrian, influence (Hersch 2010: 237). In any event, Hymenaeus' feminine features are well-established in literary and rhetorical descriptions of him (Fedeli 1983: 26–27). They also appear in the myths surrounding his person: he is said to have been a young man who disguised himself as a woman in order to be close to the woman he loved (Serv. *ad Aen.* 4.99). Hymenaeus' femininity reflects his status as a youth about to make the transition into manhood. His assumption of a female identity occurs before he is able to prove worthy of his future wife. Similarly, in another mythic version, Hymenaeus dies tragically on his wedding day (Pindar fr. 128c.7-8 S-M). In this case, his failure to enter male adulthood showcases the risks inherent in the stage of transition (treated at length in Catullus 63).[13] In addition, a certain gender ambiguity is found in descriptions of other fertility deities, such as Bacchus.

The wedding chamber, the *thalamus*, is also mentioned frequently by Roman authors as a symbol of the couple's union. When the marriage is threatened, the wife often takes refuge there to lament her fate, commit suicide, or plan her revenge.[14] As the *locus* where the couple's sexual union takes place, the *thalamus* reflects the health of the marriage, while its destruction or distortion go hand in hand with the couple's fortunes. Although it presumably belonged to both the husband and the wife, literary descriptions dwell on the *thalamus* as a haven for the wife in times of trouble or grief.[15]

Literary texts also often refer to elements from the wedding ceremony in describing the death of a married or an unmarried woman. This conflation of wedding and funeral rites has long been identified as the motif of "marriage to death," and is used extensively by Greek and Roman authors to denote problems in the marital relationship or to enhance the pathos of the untimely death of virgins, who are denied the chance to fulfill their potential as brides and mothers. Greek tragedy is the locus par excellence for the deployment of this motif, extensively analyzed by Rush Rehm in a monograph (1994).[16] In the present volume, we will encounter several instances where Roman authors put this motif to extensive use.[17]

In the chapters of this section, I first examine the wedding songs of Catullus and the marital ideals they promote (chapter 2). In chapter 3, we see how wedding and marriage are protected by the foreign goddess Isis. Turning to imperial literature, I explore the connection between marriage and civil war in the antiwedding of Marcia and Cato in Lucan's *Bellum civile* and the distorted marriage of Polyxena to the dead Achilles in Seneca's *Trojan Women* (chapter 4). This section closes with the wedding ceremony that Pri-

apus' priestess, Quartilla, performs in Petronius' *Satyrica*. From the juxtaposition of these texts, marriage emerges as a means through which authors explore familial, social, political, and gender relations. The close contact between the state and the institution of marriage is readily seen in both Catullus and Lucan, although in dramatically opposite ways. The religious context of the wedding in Ovid and Petronius empowers women, although in the former author this empowerment threatens, while in the latter it subverts, gender norms. In Seneca's *Troades*, female agency can be mustered even in circumstances of utter victimization to castigate the callousness of authority. All episodes under examination focus on women in their roles as brides and illuminate the texts they inhabit as well as the familial, social, and political norms of their time.

Sexuality and Ritual

Catullus' Wedding Poems

Though critics were slow to appreciate their beauty and poetic power, poems 61 and 62 have always held a special place in the Catullan corpus. They are the first in a group of longer poems that occupy the central place in the collection as we have it, and both are customarily referred to as marriage hymns, although neither is a hymn in the technical sense of the term. Both poems celebrate marriage and its blessings for the couple, their families, and society in general. They also provide important information on aspects of Roman marriage ritual and illuminate the way gender roles were defined and understood within the framework of marriage, the part male and female sexuality played in the marital relationship, and the value placed on marriage from a personal, familial, social, and even political viewpoint. Lastly, these poems constitute a counterpoint to the disillusioned image of love expressed in the remainder of the corpus, the result of the poet's failed relationship with Lesbia. The wedding poems, concentrating on the positive, festive aspects of marriage, offer renewed faith in the institution and its ability to provide personal fulfillment and promote social stability.

Scholars have long debated the Greek or Roman pedigree of these poems. They have also wondered whether they were composed for an actual occasion and how closely they represent Roman wedding ceremonies. Poem 61 in particular purports to commemorate the wedding of a member of the Torquati, a prominent family in Republican Rome, to an otherwise unknown Iunia (or Vinia).[1] For that reason primarily, the poem is thought to reflect Roman customs and beliefs. Poem 62 is a singing contest between choruses of maidens and youths. Its antiphonal character led many to argue that it was performed after the nuptial dinner and that it replicates Greek rather than Roman customs. Today scholarly consensus accepts that the poems were not performed at any particular wedding: even if we posit that 61 commemorates a real event and a real couple, the occasion rather serves as an opportunity for a

more general celebration of marital love. Both poems omit important parts of the wedding ceremony, and the ritual acts that they represent do not fall within any distinct phase of Roman (or Greek) wedding ritual.

Yet the ritual context and content of the poems constitute an important lens through which we can gain a better understanding of their structure, themes, and problems. Ritual descriptions involve practices and customs recognized by all Romans, and thus furnish the poet with a shared vocabulary which is available for further manipulation and interpretation.[2] Both poems are structured around specific moments of Roman marriage ritual: 61 begins as a hymn to Hymenaeus, the god of marriage; it continues as part of the *deductio* procession comprising the *fescennina iocatio*, and ends as an epithalamium, the song sung before the marital chamber. Although the specific ritual context of 62 is still the object of debate among scholars,[3] its format as a singing contest of choruses of young girls and boys, a custom consistent with (some) Greek weddings (Thomsen 1992: 166, 174), and allusions to the Roman archaic ritual practice of *raptio* provide a firm link with the wedding ceremony.[4]

Close attention to the ritual context surrounding both poems, and of the *raptio* in particular, can shed light on the most troubling features of each: in the case of 61, the great emphasis placed on the violence of the sexual act; in that of 62, the maidens' negation of marriage. In the opening lines of 61, the marriage god Hymenaeus is said to promote the violent separation of mother and daughter (*qui rapis teneram ad uirum/ uirginem*, [you who carry off the tender virgin to her husband,] 3–4). Similarly, in 62, Hesperus, a figure equivalent to Hymenaeus (Thomsen 1992: 178–86), is described as having carried off the bride (*Hesperus e nobis, aequales, abstulit unam* [Hesperus, friends, has taken one of us], 32).

The fact that these themes figure so prominently in poems celebrating marriage has caused great debate among scholars. If we look at the problem from an anthropological perspective, however, we can arrive at an explanation. The act of marriage entails a great change in the life of a Roman woman, who at a very young age (Treggiari 1991: 400, Caldwell 2007: 215–16) is about to leave her natal family in order to live with her husband in her new, marital household. The prospect of permanent separation from the natal family is bound to generate feelings of great anxiety in the bride. This anxiety is further compounded by concern over the sexual act and the act of defloration in particular. The bride's family also experiences a loss, both emotional and physical, as one of their members is about to be permanently separated from

the group. In ritual, these anxieties are often expressed with rites of capture or rape, as the Roman practice of *raptio* attests. Eventually these feelings of anxiety will give way to joy over the positive aspects of the new life awaiting the bride and groom.

Ritual thus celebrates social institutions and the roles that the individual is called to play therein, in addition to voicing anxieties surrounding these very institutions and roles. By making ritual such an integral part of his poems, Catullus incorporates the doubts and anxieties at work during this important transition in a young person's life. At the same time, ritual helps assuage anxieties and celebrates the benefits of marriage for the individual and society at large. It therefore constitutes an excellent background against which the poet may explore the contours of these themes. Viewed in this light, the poems' inherent problems and contradictions can be readily related to the greater Catullan poetic corpus, which treats love's many forms and shapes in as many different and often conflicting ways.

Although the poems overlap greatly in content and context, the following analysis will deal with them separately, focusing on what I believe are each poem's most prominent themes. Poem 61 centers around the theme of appropriate sexual activity within the framework of marriage and defines the roles of husband and wife accordingly. Poem 62, on the other hand, by dramatizing the bride's resistance to marriage, emphasizes competing gender roles and the need for the individual to comply with society's demands. Ritual proves a unique lens through which we can glimpse female claims to empowerment and agency, as well as the constraints placed on her by the bonds she shares with her family, her peers, her husband, and the Roman state. These anxieties regarding marriage expressed through the poems' engagement with wedding ritual are also in keeping with the larger meditation on marriage in the Catullan corpus as a desired, but ultimately unattainable, state.

Poem 61: Sexuality and Marriage

The poem is structured around three distinct ritual acts of the marriage ceremony: the hymn to Hymenaeus (1–75), the *deductio* and the *fescennina iocatio* (76–184), and the epithalamium (185-end). In all three sections of the poem, there is a great emphasis on love, more specifically, physical love. The poem moves from the different roles that Hymenaeus is called upon to play in the couple's union to the sexual obligations of man and woman in

their new roles as husband and wife. The poem ends by enumerating the benefits of sexual concord for the couple and society.

Female Sexuality

Physicality and violence as attributes of Hymenaeus, the god of marriage, emerge in the very first lines of the poem where, as we have seen, he is said to "carry off the tender virgin to her husband" (*qui rapis teneram ad uirum / uirginem*, 3–4). The juxtaposition of *rapis* and *teneram* contrasts the violence of the god (and the groom) with the vulnerability of the maiden. By invoking the ritual background of *raptio*, the poem addresses both the bride's separation from her natal family and her fear over the prospect of defloration:

> te suis tremulus parens
> inuocat, tibi uirgines
> zonula soluunt sinus,
> te timens cupida nouos
> captat aure maritus.
>
> tu fero iuueni in manus
> floridam ipse puellulam
> dedis a gremio suae
> matris, o Hymenaee Hymen,
> o Hymen Hymenaee. (51–60)

> You the trembling father calls for his children, for you the maidens loosen their dress from their girdle, for you the new husband listens fearful with eager ear. You yourself gave into the hands of the fierce youth the blooming maiden from the embrace of her mother, O Hymenaeus Hymen, O Hymen Hymenaeus.

Parental anxiety is expressed with the use of the words *suis tremulus* to describe the father.[5] The word order renders possible two readings: that the father is calling upon the god for the sake of his children and that the father is anxious for his children. The latter possibility is strengthened by the subsequent reference to the potential violence of the sexual act. The image of the loosening of the maiden's girdle, symbolizing the consummation of marriage, is also commemorated in ritual, where the bride ties her girdle in anticipation of the groom's untying of it later on as they share their bed.[6] The violence of the sexual act is implicit in the subsequent description of the young

man's eagerness (*cupida aure*) and fear (*tremens*) at the prospect. The use of the verb *captare* to indicate the husband's fervor for Hymen also bears intimations of violence: the verb is a frequentative of *capere* (OLD s.v. 1, "to try to touch or take hold of, grasp at;" see also 1b, as if in wrestling).

The themes of sexual violence and separation, along with references to their ritual and legal counterparts, continue in the next stanza. The repetition of the different forms of *tu* to refer to Hymenaeus is typical of the language of hymns and serves to underscore the solemn character of the prayer. Ritual underpinnings may also be detected in the use of the expression *a gremio suae/matris*. Festus' description of the *raptio* practiced in early Rome contains very similar language, leading scholars to believe he is replicating a ritual formula: *rapi simulatur uirgo ex gremio matris*, "they pretend to snatch the virgin from the embrace of her mother," 364 (Lindsay, Fedeli 1983: 53). At the same time, legal language is also operative in these lines. The phrase *fero iuueni in manus* is thought to be referring to marriage *in manum*, whereby the bride passed from the *potestas* of her father to that of her husband. This practice was rare in Catullus' time but, like the *raptio,* it would be readily recognized by his audience. Through a combination of ritual and legal language symbolic of the bride's transition to her new family, Catullus draws attention to the problems of separation from the natal family and the act of defloration.

The bride's resistance to marriage is linked to her adherence to the female ideal of *pudor*, or modesty, which necessitates feelings of timidity toward her future husband but is also motivated by feelings of loyalty toward her own family. The bride's modesty and unwillingness to part with her loved ones are at work in the next section of the poem, where she is called to come out of her house so that the *deductio* may begin (*tardet ingenuus pudor,/quem tamen magis audiens,/flet quod ire necesse est*, "Modest shame delays. Yet listening rather to it, she weeps because she must go," 79–81). The whole segment, the song before the bride's house (76–113), is structured around the delay necessitated by the bride's virtue and emotions and the chorus' efforts to overcome it so that the *deductio* may begin and the marriage may be successfully completed.

The bride's physical desire for her husband is carefully associated with her eventual fulfillment of her new role as wife and mistress of a new household. The first address to the bride is as mistress of her new home (*domum dominam uoca*, "call the mistress to her house," 31). Her new social status is predicated upon the physical and emotional bond she feels for her spouse (*coniugis cupidam noui,/mentem amore reuinciens* [desirous of her

new husband/binding her mind with love], 32–33): this notion is reinforced by a simile from nature, where the bride is likened to ivy and the husband to a tree: *ut tenax hedera huc et huc/arborem implicat errans* ("as here and there the clinging ivy wandering enfolds the tree," 34–35). The connection of ivy and tree points to the physical and emotional connection of the couple, while the choice of the image of the clinging ivy enfolding the tree suggests both the wife's dependence on her husband and the strength of their bond. A similar image appears later on in the poem and renders even more explicit the physical aspect of marital love (*lenta sed uelut adsitas/uitis implicat arbores,/implicabitur in tuum/complexum*, [but as the soft vine enfolds the nearby trees, he will be enfolded in your embrace,] 102–05): this time the husband is a vine that folds around the nearby trees, the trees equated with the bride's embrace (*complexum*). The physical connection of the spouses, emphasized in the two similes through the use of the same verb (*implicat*), also establishes the complementarity of their roles. In the first image, the tree stands for the husband; in the second, it stands for the wife. Physical and emotional desire form the foundation on which the stability of the new *domus* will rest.

The poem associates female beauty and vulnerability with virginity through an array of floral images. In one such instance, the bride is likened to a hyacinth in the garden of a rich master (*talis in uario solet/diuitis domini hortulo/stare flos hyacinthinus* [so the hyacinth flower is accustomed to stand in the colorful garden of a rich master], 87–88). The image of the garden flower within the context of marriage poetry is often employed to celebrate an ideal of female beauty that is free from the constraints of fertility and reproduction. Garden flowers do not participate in the cycle of cultivation and reproduction for human use but exist apart, untouched by the world of agriculture and civilization.[7] As a result, the beauty of the flower alone justifies its existence. Catullus modifies this image common to epithalamia by qualifying the garden as belonging to a rich master. As part of the master's property, the beautiful flower enhances the owner's status and power. This appears to be one of the roles a wife may be expected to play in marriage as described later in the poem, where the bride is invited to behold how her husband's *domus*, to which she now belongs, is powerful (*potens*, 149) and prosperous (*beata*, 150). The wife's beauty and virtue as passive objects for display constitute assets for her husband and his household.

Virginity's desirability, however, may fall victim to violent male sexuality, as the image of the hyacinth makes clear elsewhere. The hyacinth of 61

is the object of admiration but does not appear to be threatened. Another flower, however, this time in poem 62, is in danger of losing its beauty in a violent manner:

> ut flos in saeptis secretus nascitur hortis,
> ignotus pecori, nullo conuolsus aratro,
> quem mulcent aurae, firmat sol, educat imber;
> multi illum pueri, multae optauere puellae:
> *idem cum tenui carptus defloruit ungui*,
> nulli illum pueri, nullae optauere puellae:
> sic uirgo, dum intacta manet, dum cara suis est;
> cum castum amisit polluto corpore florem,
> nec pueris iucunda manet, nec cara puellis. (39–47)

> As a flower is born hidden in a fenced garden, unknown to the herd, torn up by no plow, which the breezes caress, the sun strengthens, the rain raises; many boys, many girls desire it: *when the same flower, plucked by a sharp fingernail, withers*, no boys, no girls desire it: so a virgin, while she remains untouched, is dear to her family; when she has lost her pure flower with body polluted, she remains neither sweet to the boys, nor dear to the girls.

The image of this flower has often been linked (Fraenkel 1955: 5; Stigers 1977: 90; Edwards 1992: 2) to a famous hyacinth in Sappho (L-P 105c):

> οἷαν τὰν ὐάκινθον ἐν ὤρεσι ποίμενες ἄνδρες
> πόσσι καταστείβοισι, χάμαι δέ τε πόρφυρον ἄνθος . . .

> As the hyacinth in the mountains the shepherds trample with their feet, and its purple flower [falls] to the ground . . .

Female virginity is intensely sensual and thus precarious and fragile, subject to violence on the part of the male.[8] By placing emphasis on these qualities of female sexuality, the chorus of the maidens in 62 does not see defloration as a positive result of marriage, but rather prizes a perpetual existence in the sheltered world of virginity, exemplified by the image of the garden.

In 61, virginity as enhancing the power of female sexuality appears once again in the image of the bride waiting for her husband in the *thalamus*. She is described as glowing with a flowery face, like a white chamomile or a yellow poppy (*uxor in thalamo tibi est, / ore floridulo nitens, / alba parthenice uelut / luteumue papauer*, 185–88). The diminutive *floridulo* conveys a sense

of intimacy and tenderness towards the bride (Fedeli 1983: 125) as well as a sense of vulnerability;[9] the white *parthenice* (usually identified as the chamomile) draws attention to the bride's virginity, as the word evokes the Greek word for the virgin (*parthenos*); lastly, the color of the poppy, *luteum* (yellow/orange) is also firmly associated with the bride, as the slippers she wears during the marriage ceremony are of the same color (*lutei socci*, also mentioned earlier in 61.10; see also Treggiari 1991: 163).

Male Sexuality

If poem 61 presents female sexuality as subtle, sensual, and ultimately passive, male sexuality emerges as rampant, violent, and not easily controlled. Catullus employs the wedding ritual practice of *fescennina iocatio* in order to focus on male sexual desire. The chorus' jokes involve a certain *concubinus*, or young male lover, who is now forced to end his affair with the groom. As the *deductio* marks in ritual terms the separation of the bride from her natal household, so the *fescennina iocatio* celebrates the man's abandonment of sexual affairs outside the framework of marriage (Fedeli 1983: 98), his sexual aggression now controlled and aimed toward procreation.

The husband's attachment to the *concubinus* is the main theme of this portion of the poem;[10] he must give up his male partner in order to effect a successful transition to married life. The chorus also calls on the *concubinus* himself to accept this event, asking him to recognize the marriage god Talasius as his master (126–27). Like the husband, the *concubinus* needs to enter the world of adulthood, his transition ritually symbolized in the giving of the nuts to the chorus and the cutting of his hair.

Both the nuts and the cutting of the hair, as markers of transition, constitute integral parts of the Roman marriage ceremony: as we have seen, the groom threw nuts to the boys at the end of the *deductio*, when the procession arrived at his house. This gesture is generally thought to express his abandonment of childhood (Fedeli 1983: 90). In the poem, Catullus transfers the groom's act to the *concubinus* to indicate that both need to relinquish former pleasures.[11] At the same time, there is also a hint that the *concubinus* may pose a threat to the union of the new couple. If he refuses to give the nuts to the boys, as the chorus implies (*nec nuces pueris neget*, 121; *da nuces pueris*, 124), the *deductio* cannot be completed and the bride cannot assume her rightful place in her husband's home and *thalamus*. Indeed the chorus does not hesitate to remind the *concubinus* who are appropriate sexual companions

for him: the country wives (*uilicae*), whom he has so far despised (129–30). Presumably a slave, the *concubinus* will now have to forgo the society of elegant urban masters and settle for less refined female company.

The status of the *concubinus* as a potential threat to the couple is further emphasized through attributes he shares with the bride. One of these is the cutting of his hair (131–32). In Roman marriage ritual, the bride's hair was arranged with the aid of a spear that had shed blood.[12] The cutting of the *concubinus*' long hair on his master's wedding day mirrors the parting of the bride's hair with the spear. The chorus' *iocatio* uses irony to underscore the boy's effeminacy and laugh at his expense. They say that the cutting will be performed by the *cinerarius*, the person who normally warms the tongs used to curl the hair of matrons and effeminate young men. The person who used to tend to the *concubinus*' long hair will now be cutting it (Fedeli 1983: 94).

At the same time, the groom shares with the *concubinus* traits he is called to give up as he is entering the state of marriage: the chorus refers to him as perfumed (*unguentate . . . marite*, 135). Romans believed that perfumed hair was a sign of effeminacy and that it was a practice wholly inappropriate for an adult male and a husband. The groom's perfumed hair corresponds to the *concubinus*' long hair. Their outward appearance thus reflects their status as adolescents in need of making the transition to adulthood. The groom's attachment to male partners (*glabris*, 135), young household slaves with whom he enjoyed sexual pleasures, may jeopardize the sexual role he must now play as husband.[13] As a result, the chorus calls on him to relinquish these pleasures (134–35), reminding him that they are no longer permitted to a married man (139–41).

The groom's effeminacy, depicting a reluctance to assume his full role as a male, contrasts sharply with the sexual aggression he exudes while he waits for his bride at their marital bed. The use of the word *immineat* (166) to describe the groom's state as he is lying on the bed not only intimates the physical aspect of male desire but also implies its aggressive and threatening nature: it is no coincidence that the same verb used in a military context describes a threat or menace (OLD s.v. 4b, 5, and 6). The potency of male desire is further confirmed in the next stanza, where the imagery of consuming fire, a *topos* in erotic poetry, here depicts the new husband. Once again, male desire is characterized as more intense than female; the man is said to be "burning deeper inside" than the woman (*uritur . . . penite magis*, 170–71).

Effeminacy and liminality are also closely linked with sexual aggression in the description of the god of marriage himself, Hymenaeus. The poem

opens by alluding to the god's feminine nature, which is well established in the mythical tradition (see chapter 1: 19–20). Despite his femininity, the god's sexual aggression is unmistakable: as we have seen, Hymenaeus elicits the compliance of the bride for the sexual act and serves as a model for the groom (51–55). The portrait of the god thus resembles that of Manlius: the formerly effeminate groom is ready to perform his sexual role in the context of marriage.

Sex and the Ideal Marriage

Female and male sexuality are important elements in Catullus' conception of marriage. At the same time, the poem places great emphasis on the problems sexual desire may pose to the new couple's union. The incredible power of sex necessitates that it be controlled through the laws of marriage. The goddess Venus as a metonymy for sexual power is redefined throughout the poem by a careful identification with Hymenaeus. Yet the power of Venus remains formidable, and the question of whether it can be contained within the bounds of marriage is never fully resolved.

More specifically, the poem repeatedly asserts that Hymenaeus alone constitutes the repository of appropriate physical love. Venus is accompanied by the epithet *bona* to denote legitimate love,[14] (*dux bonae Veneris, boni / coniugator amoris*, [the herald of favorable Venus, the uniter of honest love], 44–45) as opposed to adultery (denoted by *malus* and *turpis*: *non tuus leuis in mala / deditus uir adultera, / probra turpia persequens, / a tuis teneris uolet / secubare papillis*, [your husband will not, devoted to a wicked adulteress, pursuing shameful disgrace, wish to lie far from your soft breast], 97–101). Hymenaeus is the deity with the ultimate power, as he alone is responsible for the love that brings *bona fama*, the only acceptable type of love. Venus' power is thus reconfigured to comprise physical love only within marriage (*nil potest sine te Venus, / fama quod bona comprobet, / commodi capere, at potest / te uolente* [without you (Hymenaeus) Venus can take no pleasure that honorable fame may approve: but she can, if you are willing], 61–64).

The final invocation to the groom also concludes with the theme of legitimate sexual pleasure. The chorus prays that *bona Venus* may help him as he seeks physical and emotional love in socially acceptable ways (*bona te Venus / iuuerit, quoniam palam / quod cupis cupis, et bonum / non abscondis amorem* [may favorable Venus help you, because you desire what you desire openly, and you do not hide your honorable love], 195–98; see also Fedeli 1983: 127). The physical aspect of the groom's desire is meant here, as this portion

of the song takes place before the *thalamus*, the marital chamber. The groom is in a hurry to meet his wife (194–95) and the chorus encourages him to give free rein to his desire after the delay of the ritual (Fedeli 1983: 128).

Physical love as a primary concern for the felicity of the conjugal state is further conveyed through two images of counting, those of the sands of Africa and of the stars (199–203). Both images are used by Catullus in poem 7, in an explicitly physical context, as examples of the number of kisses the poet and Lesbia would share. Catullus' mobilization of the context of the earlier poem underscores the sexual aspect of the *ludi* the couple enjoys but also hints that this type of love may be as pleasurable in adultery, as in the case of our poet and his Lesbia. As a result, the images bring to the foreground the destabilizing, threatening nature of physical love.

The chorus' urge to the couple to enjoy the pleasures of marital sex (*ludite ut lubet*, 204) is followed by the reminder that its ultimate purpose is the procreation of legitimate children. Having once again established appropriate parameters for sex, the chorus concludes by encouraging the newlyweds to enjoy physical love within the constraints of marriage (*at boni/coniuges, bene uiuite et/munere assiduo ualentem/exercete iuuentam* [but you, happy spouses, live happily and in constant pleasures engage your vigorous youth!], 225–28). The vocabulary of marital felicity is repeated here to bring the poem's themes full circle: the couple will be virtuous and therefore happy in their marriage (*boni*) and will live in harmony (*bene*).[15] Yet the chorus' last exhortation is toward the enjoyment of physical love (Fedeli 1983: 146) and of the pleasures of youth while they remain silent on the other important aspects of marital life. Thus the poem concludes with an emphasis on sexual pleasure. Whether it is possible to contain it within marriage alone is a question ultimately left open.

Poem 62: Resistance to Marriage

While poem 61 ends with the theme of marital harmony, poem 62 shifts gears and dramatizes the battle of the sexes and female resistance to marriage in particular. The poem belongs to the genre of *carmen amoebaeum* or singing contest, developed by the Hellenistic poet Theocritus. In Roman literature, the most famous examples of such contests are Vergil's *Eclogues* 3 and 7. Like the other poems in this genre, Catullus 62 pays close attention to structural symmetry, whereby each stanza (strophe) is followed by a response (antistrophe) in the same number of lines. The poem begins with introductory lines spoken by a chorus of youths, followed by a response from a chorus of

maidens (1–10). A statement on the part of the youths concludes this introductory section (11–19). Then follows the singing match proper, consisting of three pairs of stanzas (20–58). The poem ends with an epilogue (59–66). Throughout the poem, each stanza is followed by a refrain, which forms another important structural device. In the second pair of stanzas, however, the text is heavily damaged, which has resulted in lively scholarly controversy as to how many lines are spoken by the maidens and how many by the youths (Thomson 1997: 365). Further debate has arisen over who speaks the final lines of the epilogue.[16]

As in 61, here too ritual elements underscore the poem's content. As a result, ritual once again constitutes a background against which the theme of female resistance to marriage is played out. The question of the precise ritual setting of the poem has given yet another occasion for debate among scholars. Fraenkel (1955), in a highly influential article, suggested that the poem reflects Roman rather than Greek wedding customs, while Tränkle (1983) and Courtney (1985) argued an opposing view.[17] More recently, Goud (1995: 31–32) has claimed that the contest takes place at the end of the banquet and before the *deductio* begins. This is the moment of the *raptio*, the ritual tearing away of the bride from her mother's embrace. Thomsen (1992: 166–73) believes that the contest is linked to the absence of the bride. He rightly points out that if the maidens are not defeated in the singing match and the bride does not return, the marriage cannot take place. As a result, the poem and its ritual context dramatize a moment of crisis. The resistance of the maidens and of the bride will, however, be eventually overcome with the return of the bride and the completion of the *deductio* procession. The bride's return symbolizes her willing integration into her marital household and her new role as a Roman wife. Thus the poem's ritual context serves to give voice to anxieties inherent in the events it celebrates, while at the same time it provides comfort and reassurance by stressing the benefits of marriage for all.

Let us now turn to the poem itself in order to observe how the contest between male and female is articulated, in what ways it provides a space where competing ideas about the role of men and women within marriage arise, and whether female resistance is eventually replaced by a joyful anticipation of married life.

The poem's opening stanzas state explicitly that the contest is about victory: the boys rise to sing (*surgere iam tempus*, 3), the girls rise in return (*consurgite contra*, 6) and express the wish to win the singing match (*canent quod*

uincere par est, [they will sing something that it is right to surpass], 9). The boys further perceive that the girls are formidable competitors (*non facilis nobis, aequales, palma parata est* [no easy palm of victory is ready for us, friends], 11) and that their own lack of preparation will jeopardize their chances of winning (*iure igitur uincemur*: *amat uictoria curam*, [we will be defeated rightly: victory loves care], 16). The poem thus begins with the presumption that marriage provides resolution to an existing struggle between the sexes, whereby one will submit to the superiority of the other. In this light, the maidens' resistance is not wholly surprising. The vocabulary of victory (*uincere*, 9; *palma*, 11; *uincemur* and *uictoria*, 16) employed by both sides negates or undermines the professed complementarity and harmony in the roles of husband and wife and rather dwells on the necessity of a power differential between the sexes.

The context of competition and victory provides fruitful ground on which opposing attitudes on marriage on the part of the youths and the maidens are articulated. In each pair of stanzas, the girls call on Hesperus, the evening star, to complain of the violence of male sexuality and the dominance of male over female, while the boys cast the same god as a guarantor of progress and civilization. More specifically, in the first stanza of the contest proper, the reality of male violence is repeatedly asserted: Hesperus is called most cruel (*quis caelo fertur crudelior ignis?* [what is a crueller fire in the sky?], 20) and is twice said to tear the girl away from her mother (*qui natam possis complexu auellere matris, / complexu matris retinentem auellere natam*, "who can tear the daughter from her mother's embrace, / tear away the clinging daughter from her mother's embrace," 21–22). Like Hesperus, the husband exhibits a burning desire for the girl (*iuueni ardenti*, 23) and his union with the bride is compared to the capture of a city by an enemy (*quid faciunt hostes capta crudelius urbe*? [what crueller thing do enemies do when they have captured a city?], 24). Marriage is thus presented as violent and destructive.

The boys, however, cast marriage as a social institution that guarantees unity not only between the sexes but also between families. The point is emphasized through the use of legal language to describe Hesperus, the star that unites the couple in marriage, as a mutual contract (*desponsa . . . conubia* [the contracted nuptials], 27) that is enduring (*firmes*, [you confirm], 27) and binding for the spouses and their families (*quae pepigere uiri, pepigerunt ante parentes*, [which husbands and fathers have promised beforehand,] 28).[18] Marriage also provides a most desirable unity among the parties involved, a unity not achieved by other means (*nec iunxere prius quam se tuus*

extulit ardor, [united not before your fire has risen], 29). The chorus conclude their argument by attributing to divine authority the provenance of the institution of marriage (*quid datur a diuis felici optatius hora*? [what more desirable thing do the gods give than the happy hour?], 30) thus establishing the superiority of the social aspects of marriage over the personal and familial ones invoked by the maidens. At the same time, the boys' version of the importance of marriage is confined to a male perspective: the contracts are made by husbands and fathers (*uiri*, *parentes*, 28), relegating the women to passive compliance. As a result, the boys' claim of unity and harmony is predicated upon female submission to male authority.

The theme of marriage as violent and lawless rape on the one hand and as an integral part of a lawful and civilized society on the other continues in the next pair of stanzas. Although the text of the strophe is badly damaged, most scholars agree that it contains an explicit reference to the *raptio* ritual. Thomsen (1992: 182) offers evidence that the verb *auferre* is also used in the context of Proserpina's rape in Ovid's *Fasti* (4.445 and 448). The textual gap makes the context of the maidens' reproach to Hesperus particularly difficult to understand,[19] but the boys' response depicts him as a catcher of thieves and a guarantor of law and order in a manner very similar to that of their previous statement (*namque tuo aduentu uigilat custodia semper, / nocte latent fures, quos idem saepe reuertens, / Hespere, mutato comprendis nomine Eous* [for when you come, the guards are always awake, the thieves hide at night, whom you often catch when you return, Hesperus, the same but with the changed name Eous], 33–35; Thomsen 1992: 263). At the same time, the boys' claims once again undermine the validity of those of the girls: just as in the previous stanza female participation in the legal proceedings of the wedding was purely secondary, so in this instance the girls' reproaches to Hesperus are discredited as false (*ficto . . . questu*, [with false complaint], 36). As a result, the boys appropriate the function of Hesperus/marriage in order to validate their point of view, while they also affirm the superiority of their voice over that of the other sex.[20]

In the final pair of stanzas, the maidens and youths introduce images from nature to support their respective claims. As we have seen earlier, the girls advocate virginity using the image of a beautiful untouched flower, whose purpose is a peaceful existence free from the constraints of marriage and fertility, but which is subject to violent destruction on the part of the male. The boys manipulate the same concept and embed it in the realm of agriculture, which necessarily promotes fertility and reproduction, the indispensable

consequences of marriage for society at large. Thus the flower now becomes a vine that needs to be united in marriage to the elm (*at si forte eadem est ulmo coniuncta marito* [but if by chance the same one is joined to an elm as her husband], 54).[21] The image of marriage presented here initially appears as one that prescribes equal and complementary roles for husband and wife (*par conubium* [equal marriage], 57),[22] and promotes harmony between the sexes so that the important function of reproduction may take place. Yet the last statement of the boys' chorus returns to the theme of the antagonism between the sexes. The state of marriage emerges as most desirable for men (*cara uiro magis et minus est inuisa parenti* [she (i.e., the bride) is more dear to her husband and less hateful to her father], 58), while there is no mention of the woman's sentiments. Thus the singing match concludes, as it started, with a privileging of the male perspective and an affirmation of the power differential between the sexes.

Ideal Marriage for Family and State

In both poems, female resistance to marriage eventually gives way to the joys of the new life awaiting the bride and groom. In the conclusion of poem 62, the bride is urged to comply with social demands that require that she enters the state of marriage willingly (60–65):

> non aequom est pugnare, pater cui tradidit ipse,
> ipse pater cum matre, quibus parere necesse est.
> uirginitas non tota tua est, ex parte parentum est,
> tertia pars patrist, pars est data tertia matri,
> tertia sola tua est: noli pugnare duobus,
> qui genero sua iura simul cum dote dederunt.
>
> It is not right to vie with him to whom your father himself gave you, your father himself with your mother, whom it is necessary to obey. Your virginity is not all your own, part of it belongs to your parents, a third belongs to your father, a third was given to your mother, only a third is your own: do not vie with two, who have given to their son-in-law their rights along with the dowry.

Regardless of who speaks these final lines,[23] the arithmetic used to define the woman's identity focuses on her family obligations and by extension on the reciprocity fundamental to the proper function of social relations.[24] Personal attachments or other concerns, such as those voiced by the chorus of maidens during the contest, must be abandoned. The language of arithmetic

and ownership is accompanied by legal terminology (*sua iura, dote*),[25] thus validating the line of argument the boys have employed all along.

Marriage necessitates female submission to social constraints because its main purpose is socially determined. Through marriage the continuation of the family line, whose significance for society at large hardly needs mention, is ensured. Poem 61 takes special note of the importance of reproduction for the survival of the household while stressing the ideal of reciprocity governing the relationship between parents and children: just as the children depend on their parents in order to grow and reach adulthood, so the parents rely on their children in their old age: *nulla quit sine te domus/liberos dare, nec parens/stirpe nitier*; *at potest/te uolente* (no house can give children without you, nor a parent rely on his offspring; but it can if you are willing, 66–69).

Furthermore, marriage is the only framework within which familial felicity may be achieved, as the tender image of young Manlius on his mother's lap, reaching over to his father smiling (209–13) attests. Important reminders follow: legitimate children alone secure continuity within the family:

> sit suo similis patri
> Manlio et facile insciis
> noscitetur ab omnibus,
> et pudicitiam suae
> matris indicet ore.
>
> talis illius a bona
> matre laus genus approbet,
> qualis unica ab optima
> matre Telemacho manet
> fama Penelopeo. (214–23)
>
> Let him look like his father Manlius and be recognized easily by all strangers, and by his face declare the chastity of his mother. May such praise from a virtuous mother prove the worth of his family like the unparalleled fame that endures for Penelope's Telemachus from his honorable mother.

Continuity is particularly crucial in the case of the Torquati, a family famous for saving the Capitol from the Gauls and perhaps even more famous for putting a son to death, an action that appears to have rendered them in the eyes of their fellow Romans both heroic and inhuman.[26] The image of the young child reaching over to his father therefore has particular resonance. Without

children this noble family, as well as any other family, is bound to face extinction (see also Newman 1990: 206–07).

Familial continuity, however, rests wholly upon female fidelity. The paradigm of Penelope is pivotal in making this point.[27] The magnitude of her contribution to her family's lasting fame may also be seen in the poet's naming of Telemachus. While one would expect a patronymic, Telemachus is instead defined as the son of Penelope (*Telemacho . . . Penelopeo*). Female fidelity is the sole means by which legitimate children may guarantee not only the family's survival but also its good standing in the community. It therefore constitutes an integral part of the greater network of social relations. The woman's willing participation in marriage is indispensable for the proper functioning of society.

Family in Roman thought often serves as a microcosm for the state, and poem 61 is no exception. In enumerating the blessings of marriage, the poet also makes a brief yet crucial mention of the intimate relationship between procreation and the safety of the state: marriage produces soldiers who will defend the land (*quae tuis careat sacris,/ non queat dare praesides/ terra finibus*: *at queat/ te uolente*: [the land that lacks your sacred rites could not give guardians for its borders: but it could if you are willing], 71–74). Rome's military and political power is therefore contingent upon this vital social institution.

Yet despite the positive view of marriage and its focus on social demands, hints of resistance persist.[28] Poem 62 may assign two thirds of the woman's identity to others, but the final third belongs to herself. And though the boys' perspective may appear to prevail, many readers claim that the girls' arguments have greater resonance (Stigers 1977: 97; Thomsen 1992: 229) and fit neatly with the theme of the failure of marriage in the other long poems. Most importantly, the images of female resistance and vulnerability deployed in these poems find their starkest expression in the image of another flower touched by a plow in poem 11.22–24 (Stigers 1977: 98; Edwards 1993: 185–86; see Greene, 2007: 142–46). The male narrator's self-identification with the delicate flower lends greater gravity and poignancy to the absence of a true integration of female anxieties and social constraints in 61 and 62.

These anxieties are not foreign to the Catullan corpus. Catullus regards his relationship to Lesbia as a marriage, but one that is hopelessly tainted by her infidelity. The destructive nature of sexual desire, the individual's resistance to societal expectations, and the inability of social institutions to allow expression to the gamut of human experience are themes all too familiar to

Catullus' readers. Catullus' own oscillation between male and female roles vividly displays the conflicting ways in which agency is pulled and pushed in different directions by communal bonds and obligations.

The poems depict female participation in marriage not as an explicit denial of their agency but as conditioned by the demands of the bonds they share with different social groups: their natal family, their peers, their marital family, and the state. The poems' focus on the various rites associated with the wedding helps keep the spotlight on the young woman and the ways in which she can lay claim to agency by means of the host of identities she is called upon to inhabit: as a daughter, a bride, a wife, a Roman citizen. Ritual context and poetic content validate female resistance to marriage as a powerful manifestation of the conflict between individual needs and societal demands, thus rendering the woman an agent who negotiates her consent rather than a simple object of exchange among (elite) clans. Catullus' wedding poems have had such a lasting impact on their readers because they mobilize the emotive power of ritual to express female anxiety over the violence connected with the act of defloration. But unlike ritual ceremonies, where anxieties are expressed in order to be assuaged so that the new phase in the couple's life can be duly celebrated, Catullus' poems are often most remembered for their haunting delineation of female fragility.

Isis at a Wedding

Gender, Ethnicity, and Roman Identity in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 9

The story of Iphis in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 9 presents a unique example of the importance of women's worship for delineating major themes such as gender and social identity. It also offers insights into the concept of national identity that preoccupies Roman consciousness in the years of the early Empire.

In what follows, I examine the role of the Egyptian goddess Isis in Ovid's story of Iphis and argue that Ovid's appropriation of the divinity plays a double role. On the one hand, her Egyptian identity is presented not as threatening but as blended with Roman religious practices. Isis emerges as a deity who is especially responsive to universal human suffering, regardless of class or ethnicity. On the other hand, she is presented as particularly sympathetic to the plight of women and is instrumental in facilitating their empowerment,[1] in this case at the expense of established familial and gender norms. As a vehicle for female empowerment, her role in the episode and the treatment of her ethnic origin raise important questions about Roman ideas surrounding identity and gender. I argue that Ovid's narrative explores how changes in the religious milieu may offer possibilities for expanding norms surrounding gender roles and social hierarchies.

The story of Iphis is the last one in *Metamorphoses* 9. It follows immediately after the story of Byblis and comes right before the story of Orpheus in book 10. Each of these episodes depicts thwarted love, and in each, transgression of sexual, gender, and familial norms is a paramount concern. In this instance, a destitute father, Ligdus, instructs his wife, Telethusa, to kill her newborn if she is a girl. Telethusa, a devoted follower of Isis, receives instruction from the goddess in a dream that she is not to harm the newborn and that she will be rewarded for her piety. Telethusa brings the girl up as a boy, and the deception is successful until, at the age of thirteen, the girl, Iphis, falls in love with another girl, Ianthe. The two are betrothed, but

as the wedding day approaches, Iphis faces exposure. On that day, however, Telethusa prays to Isis, who turns Iphis into a man and makes the wedding possible.

The story has recently received much attention from critics. Some have focused on Iphis' and Ianthe's similarity and equality, which is stressed by the text, as it appears to indicate a relationship that is close to modern perceptions of lesbianism.[2] Others see Iphis as an indication of "gender trouble," the existence of a third category that upsets established ideas of sex and gender, reflecting the disempowerment felt by Roman elites at the emergence of a new, more authoritarian regime (Raval 2002). Still others regard the story as belonging "within the category of homosexual love in the ancient world (and attendant homophobia), and reassert[ing] the primacy of the ancient categories of 'active' versus 'passive'" (Gibson 2007).[3]

My own interest lies in examining how Isis' role and her relationship with the women of the story, Telethusa and Iphis, empower them to act in a way that goes against social hierarchies and norms of gender identity. Isis' foreign character is also operative here, because it emerges as a fundamental marker of alterity that is potentially threatening to Roman values surrounding gender and family. But Ovid's text works hard to incorporate Isis' powerful divinity and universal appeal into Roman religious and ritual structures. The story, then, provides a unique intersection of gender, ritual, and ethnicity, indicating that the contours of Roman identity are more dynamic and malleable than previously thought.

Isis in Rome

Isis is an Egyptian goddess whose cult was widespread in the Greco-Roman world in Hellenistic and Roman times. The cult enjoyed great popularity in Rome and Italy among both the plebs and the aristocracy.[4] Although the integration of Isis into Roman state religion seems to have met with some resistance (for example, in the middle of the first century BCE, three senatorial decrees were passed against the cult),[5] the state eventually embraced the goddess's worship, evident in the Second Triumvirate's decision to build a temple in her honor in 43 BCE (D.C. *Hist*. 47.15–16). Even though there is no evidence that the temple was ever built (Heyob 1975: 19–20; Wissowa 1912: 352), there is ample evidence of sanctuaries and altars dedicated to the goddess in Rome, both private and public (Takács 1995: 67). By the first half of the first century CE, Isis had a public sanctuary in the Campus Martius (Takács 1995: 19) and the Capitol (Takács 1995: 76n.11, Roller 2010: 116), while

Vitruvius mentions a temple in the Roman marketplace (Vitr. 1.7.1; Orlin 2002: 6).

Octavian/Augustus' policies and attitudes toward Isis also deserve mention.[6] Dio reports (*Hist*. 40.47.3–4; 53.2.4) that he banned twice the worship of Isis and other Egyptian deities in Rome, ostensibly because of their association with Cleopatra and Antony. As part of the larger framework of Octavian's propaganda, the worship of Isis served as a reminder of their foreignness, encouraging longstanding Roman prejudices against the East as effeminate and decadent.[7] Nevertheless, scholars posit that these efforts were aimed at curbing public worship; they see no evidence that Augustus frowned upon private worship of Isis.[8] Far from it: he made provisions for restoring Egyptian temples (D.C. *Hist*. 53.2.4–5). Egyptian art objects were also heavily imported in Rome and Italy, while Egyptianizing elements abound in art during this period (Swetnam-Burland 2015). For example, "Livia's" villa was decorated with Egyptian motifs.[9] Whatever the case may be, Egyptian and Isiac elements are conspicuous in Rome in this period, be it in religion or art. Isis found a home in Rome without completely losing her foreign character.

In Rome, Isis' roles and functions were transformed to fit the needs of the Roman people. Scholars posit that her worship spread to Italy from her famous sanctuary in Delos, which dates to Hellenistic times.[10] The goddess was identified with both Venus (Takács 1995: 46) and Ceres (Takács 1995: 39) but also with a number of other deities. Herodotus (2.59) mentions a festival celebrated in the city of Bubastis in honor of Bast or Bastet, an Egyptian deity eventually equated with Isis herself, and identifies her with Artemis, protector of the young and of women giving birth.[11] These functions facilitated her further linkage with Hekate and Eileithyia.[12] She also develops a lunar character, especially in iconography, as her horns are moon-shaped. Her horns link her also with Io, Jupiter's rape victim, whose travels took her to Egypt.[13] Isis' role in inventing and maintaining marriage is an important theme in the surviving aretalogies, that is, hymns that praise Isis (Alvar Ezquerra 2008: 324). She also features commonly in stories of saving (Winkler 1985: 278–79), and there is considerable evidence that she was a goddess of healing, appearing in dreams and visions, like other healing gods such as Asclepius, although it is not clear that actual dream therapy (*enkoimesis*) was practiced at her sanctuaries (Alvar Ezquerra 2008: 328).

Isis is also closely linked with Osiris, her twin brother and consort, whom the Romans identified with the god Dionysus. In Plutarch's account of the goddess's story, Osiris was slain, cut up to pieces, and scattered all over Egypt.

Isis found his body parts and buried each one. His penis was the only part that she did not find. Plutarch tells us that she created a replica of the penis and consecrated it (*Is.* 18.358b). Osiris comes back to life, and Isis has another child with him, Harpocrates.[14] Isis thus represents the power of life after death, and rebirth.

Two festivals associated with Isis were celebrated in Rome and the territories of the empire. One of them, called Isidis Navigium (the vessel of Isis), was held on March 5. The festival celebrated Isis Pelagia, mistress of the sea, inventor of navigation, and protector of sailors (Alvar Ezquerra 2008: 296–99). We have a detailed description of the rites in Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* 11, which is also our main source. Although we have no evidence that the festival was celebrated before the second century CE, Isis' connection with the sea was probably well-known. Another festival, the Isia, was held between October 28 and November 3. Scholars of religion believe it was first introduced in Rome in the late Republic (Alvar Ezquerra 2008: 299). The festival was a ritual staging of the myth of Isis and Osiris. The first part of the festival was devoted to Isis' lamentation for the loss of her husband and her desperate search for him: worshippers shaved their heads, beat their breasts, and slashed their arms. The festival ended with a joyous celebration (Hilaria) of Osiris' rescue and recovery.

This brief portrait of Isis' place in the Roman pantheon sheds light on the reasons behind Ovid's choice to present her as effecting Iphis' metamorphosis, as well as on his departure from other literary traditions that featured Leto in this position. In those, the story of Iphis was an *aition* for a particular shrine in Crete of Leto Φυτίη (Leto who causes male genitals to grow) and for a strange premarital ritual involving the male statue of the former girl.[15] Ovid's attraction to Isis is surely manifold. The goddess's association with birth and mothers makes her particularly appropriate for a story about saving a baby's life. In addition, Isis is popular with both the lower and the upper classes.[16] As such, she is an appropriate protector of Ligdus and Telethusa, creating a sharp contrast between the dire constraints placed upon them by their extreme poverty and the divine favor that rewards their piety. At the same time, Isis' transnational identity elides notions of ethnic differences—an Egyptian goddess helps a couple in Crete.[17] This multiethnic background is organically connected with the story's major themes about gender, familial, and national identity. Furthermore, as a goddess who can create a phallus, Isis is a particularly apt deity for overseeing Iphis' "rebirth" as male.[18]

Ritual Worship and Foreignness

Isis' salient role in this episode is that of the powerful goddess who rewards piety but also upsets familial (and by extension social) relations. Telethusa's role as a loyal participant in the goddess's cult is important in establishing that the woman and the goddess enjoy a special relationship and helps explain the unusual agency that Telethusa displays under the circumstances.[19] When the story begins, the woman receives with great distress her husband's order to kill their child if it is born a girl. Despite her efforts to dissuade him, she fails. Telethusa does not contemplate opposing her husband until Isis speaks to her in a dream:

> tum uelut excussam somno et manifesta uidentem
> sic adfata dea est: 'pars o Telethusa mearum,
> pone graues curas mandataque falle mariti;
> nec dubita, cum te partu Lucina leuarit,
> tollere quidquid erit. dea sum auxiliaris opemque
> exorata fero, nec te coluisse quereris
> ingratum numen.' monuit thalamoque recessit. (9.695–701)

> Then the goddess said to her as if she was awake from sleep and seeing clearly: "Telethusa, my initiate, put your heavy cares behind you and defy your husband's instructions; when the moon goddess has relieved you from the burden of childbirth, do not fear to raise the child, whatever it will be. I am your god and helper and will bring aid when asked; nor will you complain that you have worshipped an ungrateful deity." With this advice, she left the bedchamber.

Isis instructs Telethusa to disobey her husband (*mandataque falle mariti*, 9.697). The goddess does not tell her how she is going to fix this impossible situation; Telethusa takes the initiative to cross-dress Iphis and succeeds in passing the girl off as a boy. Isis thus intervenes in order to empower Telethusa, who assumes the role of interpreter: she understands the goddess's promise to be an endorsement to act, not simply following prescribed direction, but on her own initiative. Telethusa's loyal worship of the goddess results in a special relationship between them, which is evident from the goddess's epiphany. The narrator's comment on the vividness of the apparition conveys the power of the goddess's presence. Other elements mark Telethusa's ritual role as particularly important: her connection to ritual is highlighted by her

name, which derives from the Greek τελέθω ("come into being"), a verb etymologically connected with the word τελετή ("rite").[20] Isis explicitly refers to Telethusa as her initiate (*pars o Telethusa mearum*, 696). Moreover, Telethusa's empowerment is made possible by and sanctioned within the female ritual space (the worship of Isis), opposing both familial and gender hierarchies. In doing so, her actions also confuse gender boundaries.

Telethusa's request to Isis is also performed in ceremonial terms, as her supplication takes the form of a hymn:

> at illa
> crinalem capiti uittam nataeque sibique
> detrahit et passis aram complexa capillis
> 'Isi, Paraetonium Mareoticaque arua Pharonque
> quae colis et septem digestum in cornua Nilum,
> fer, precor' inquit, 'opem nostroque medere timori.
> te, dea, te quondam tuaque haec insignia uidi
> [cunctaque cognoui, sonitum comitesque facesque]
> †sistrorum† memorique animo tua iussa notaui.
> quod uidet haec lucem, †quod non ego punior, ecce†
> consilium munusque tuum est; miserere duarum
> auxilioque iuua.' lacrimae sunt uerba secutae. (9.770–81)
>
> Then she [Telethusa] took off the headband on her head and her daughter's and with her hair flowing she embraced the altar: "Isis, you who lives in Paraetonium, the fields of lake Mareotis and Pharos, and on the Nile which divides itself into seven branches, help us, I pray," she says, "and release us from our fear! Long ago I saw you, goddess, and your well-known emblems [and recognized them all, the sound of your rattles, your attendants, and your torches], and I took your orders to my mindful heart. Look! it is because of your counsel and your gift that my daughter sees the light, that I escaped punishment. Take pity on us both and grant us your help!" Tears followed on her words.

The suppliant removes the headbands from herself and her daughter to let their hair loose as one does in prayer (to remove all bindings that symbolically stand for obstacle and difficulty). She embraces the altar of Isis (its location is uncertain, but most likely it is in front of a temple)[21] and utters her prayer, which contains standard hymnic elements: it names the goddess, followed by a relative clause listing her favorite habitations, while the request appears last. Telethusa reminds Isis of her previous (unsolicited) epiphany

and the close relationship they share, all standard elements of hymnic poetry. Interestingly, Isis, who initially helps confuse gender relations, is now asked to reassert traditional sexual roles.

Isis' interference in matters of gender and family goes side by side with her foreign identity, which is particularly stressed in the description of her epiphany in Telethusa's dream:

> cum medio noctis spatio sub imagine somni
> Inachis ante torum pompa comitata sacrorum
> aut stetit aut uisa est; inerant lunaria fronti
> cornua cum spicis nitido flauentibus auro
> et regale decus. cum qua latrator Anubis
> sanctaque Bubastis uariusque coloribus Apis,
> quique premit uocem digitoque silentia suadet;
> sistraque erant numquamque satis quaesitus Osiris
> plenaque somniferis serpens peregrina uenenis. (9.686–94)

> When in the middle of the night, in the form of a dream, Inachus' daughter, accompanied by a procession of her sacred emblems, was either standing before her bed or seemed to be, horns were on her brow, shaped like the crescents of the moon, with corn spikes shining with gleaming gold and her royal adornment. With her, barking Anubis, sacred Bubastis, multicolored Apis, and the one who asks for silence, pressing his lips with his finger. There were rattles and Osiris, always sought after, and the foreign snake, full of sleep-bearing venom.

Egyptian elements dominate this description of Isis, which nevertheless aims to bring the concepts of *foreign* and *Roman* together. The idea that Isis is foreign, exotic, and potentially dangerous is conveyed through Ovid's mobilization of the Vergilian intertext of the battle of Actium, where the conflict between Octavian and Antony is cast as a clash between Roman West and barbarian East.[22] In Vergil's text, the Egyptian gods are monstrous (*monstra*, 698) and ready to use weapons against the Roman deities (*contra . . . / tela tenent*, *A*. 8.699–700). Ovid evokes this particular context by using the same phrase for Anubis, *latrator* (*A*. 8.698). Other common elements include the *sistrum* and snakes. Vergil connects them with Cleopatra, while Ovid recasts all of these as part of an impressive procession (*pompa*), which is peaceful and emblematic of positive power.

Ovid's inclusion of the other members of Isis' retinue, Bubastis, Apis, and Horus/Harpocrates (represented as a child with his finger in his mouth), as

well as the presence of Osiris and the serpent, which for the Egyptians is a symbol of the life-giving Nile (Anderson 1972: 467), would be both exotic and familiar to a Roman audience. At the same time, the goddess appears to belong to the Greco-Roman pantheon: her famous depiction wearing horns helps her identification with Io; since horns recall the shape of the moon, they refer to Isis' identity as a moon goddess (see Bömer 1977: 480–81 and introduction); and the mention of the yellow ears of corn point to her identification with Demeter (in Greece) and Ceres (in Rome). Ovid's portrait of the goddess presents her in procession in all her glory, at home in Greece and Rome as in Egypt. Ovid's passage points to the deity as a universal, positive, but also potentially dangerous force. Ovid strikes a delicate balance here: the harmonious coexistence of elements foreign and domestic succeeds the earlier destabilization of social protocols and gender hierarchies.

Isis and the Roman Wedding

Despite the stress on Isis' foreignness, wedding ritual in the episode is always imagined in Roman terms. Details surrounding standard practices at Roman weddings are used to express the paradox of Iphis' situation and do so in a way that prescribes the story's outcome. When the young girl contemplates the difficulties her anatomy poses for the fulfillment of her sexual desire, she expresses her situation as distorting ritual custom:

> uenit ecce optabile tempus,
> luxque iugalis adest, et iam mea fiet Ianthe—
> nec mihi continget; mediis sitiemus in undis.
> pronuba quid Iuno, quid ad haec, Hymenaee, uenitis
> sacra, quibus qui ducat abest, ubi nubimus ambae? (9.759–63)

> Look! The longed-for time is coming, the wedding day is here, and now Ianthe will be mine—but this won't come to pass for me: though in the midst of water, we'll be parched. Matron-of-honor Juno, Hymen, why do you come to these rites from which the groom is absent, where the wedding is between two brides?

The wedding ceremony Iphis envisions between herself and Ianthe is ritually problematic but distinctly Roman: the mention of the *lux iugalis* has a twofold meaning, signaling both the day of the wedding and the role of light in the form of torches during the Roman wedding ceremony and procession. The wedding's presiding deities, Juno *pronuba* and Hymenaeus, are both present,

yet Iphis states that the ritual cannot materialize without a groom. Iphis finds it impossible to contemplate a wedding where there will be no *deductio* (*quibus qui ducat abest*), that is the procession to the groom's house. Furthermore, the alliteration of *nubimus ambae* emphasizes that the verb *nubere*, "to marry," whose literal meaning is to cover oneself with a veil and which points to the bride's attire, applies only to women. In other words, by articulating her lesbianism in terms of ritual distortion, Iphis denies its possibility. Since this statement ends her speech, we may read it as a climactic point. While throughout her monologue Iphis both questions and affirms established gender roles and sexual hierarchies, her concluding statements reveal that Roman ritual precludes the possibility of recasting or imagining these roles differently.

Isis' intervention also occurs within the ritual context of the wedding. Previously, the deity's Egyptian ethnicity has been used to reinforce the problematic aspects of her role as disrupting existing family and gender relations. At the moment when the goddess acts in response to Telethusa's request, she does so, rather surprisingly, in Roman terms:

> cum Venus et Iuno sociosque Hymenaeus ad ignes
> conueniunt, potiturque sua puer Iphis Ianthe. (9.796–97)
>
> When Venus, Juno, and Hymenaeus come together at the nuptial torches,
> Iphis as a boy possesses his Ianthe.

Although the goddess is Egyptian, the effect of her actions is sanctioned by strictly Roman ritual ceremony, which, thanks to her intervention, is now able to take place correctly: not only are all the appropriate gods present (Venus, Juno, and Hymenaeus), along with the ritual accoutrements (the torches), but the appropriate gender roles are also restored, with Iphis, now a boy, able to fulfill his marital role (*potitur*).

Despite this happy and ritually correct outcome, questions persist about the nature of Iphis' masculinity. The verb *potitur* is used to denote male sexual domination (OLD s.v. 2c). Yet Iphis here is said to be a *puer*, a term that belies his ability to perform the role of husband. *Puer* normally describes a young boy who has not yet become an adult man, a *uir*, thus rendering the juxtaposition of the words *potiturque . . . puer* incongruent.[23] In other words, it is implied that Iphis as *puer* may not be able to perform his role as husband. Iphis herself used the verb *potior* earlier to express the impossibility of fulfilling her desire: *non potienda* (753). Iphis thus appears not to have

made the full transition to male, but only to the liminal stage of *puer*. As a result, Iphis' transformation provides an important qualification to Isis' association with empowerment: Iphis feels powerless as a female and empowered as a male, although as a *puer* she is denied full empowerment.[24] Telethusa's defiance of norms, too, occurs within the context of bondedness, since she challenges her husband's position as head of the household but does not seek to overturn the family hierarchy.[25]

Regardless of our assessment of the degree of Iphis' masculinity, Ovid's portrait of the goddess presents her as at once Egyptian and Romanized. As her power manifests itself in a Roman setting, it disrupts Roman familial, gender, and sexual values. Eventually, however, when the goddess performs her miracle, she does so in the context of the Roman wedding, as if she herself has experienced a transformation from Egyptian to Roman (a process encapsulated in Ovid's earlier description of her epiphany to Telethusa). The ability of the goddess to instill agency in the women thus appears to be neutralized by the framework of Roman ritual ceremony.

Isis and Io

Isis as a catalyst for women's action is one of her most fascinating aspects in this story. The goddess's empowerment of those who are helpless, and women in particular, can be further illuminated by probing her identification with Io.[26] Isis' sympathy to the plight of Telethusa and Iphis obtains greater resonance if we consider Io's story in *Met*. 1.568–749. Io, one of the most undeserving victims of divine whim, is reduced to a position of utter helplessness and oppression. Raped by Jupiter, transformed into a cow, and ceaselessly followed by Argus, she cannot seek or get help. Her final (730–33) image in the poem is that of suppliant, in a position of utter submission, offering herself up to the Nile River.[27] In this, she resembles Telethusa, who, as we have seen, also appears as a suppliant (9.702–03; 770–81). Isis' identification with Io in this instance points to the goddess's special empathy for humans. At the same time, we already see hints of agency in Io's portrayal: although she is denied the use of language, she is still able to communicate with her family by tracing her name on the sand with her hoof (1.649–50).[28] This surprising moment of agency points to her future empowerment in the guise of the Egyptian goddess Isis (1.747). Having experienced suffering firsthand, Isis now emerges as a new type of deity, one with a special connection with her worshippers and a profound understanding of the human condition.

Ritual and Poetry

The connection between prayers and hymns used in ritual and the creation of poetry deserves mention, because it creates a link between the power of ritual and the power of poetry. As Fritz Graf (1988: 61) has pointed out, this episode reads as an aretalogy of Isis, thus blurring the boundaries between epic and sacred text. Telethusa's prayer also displays close intertextual contact with elegy, and specifically Ovid's own prayer to Isis in *Am.* 2.13.8–18. Leaving aside the irony of asking a goddess associated with birth to preside over an abortion, we see that Ovid's poem follows the structure and formulaic vocabulary found in hymns. He names the goddess, then follows with a relative clause listing Isis' favorite haunts, and imagines her in procession, which is reminiscent of Isis' epiphany later in this episode. Such invocations are well established tropes that date as early as archaic Greek poetry (e.g. Sappho L-P 1, "Hymn to Aphrodite"): by recalling past epiphanies of the goddess, the poet ensures a fresh one. Here, too, Ovid stresses the exceptional loyalty Corinna has shown the deity (2.13.8–10).[29] Viewed through this intertextual lens, Telethusa's supplication transcends the realm of private prayer because it belongs to a powerful poetic trope. The intertextual contact casts the suppliant Telethusa in the role of a poet, and of Ovid in particular. Telethusa's cultic and poetic roles enhance her agency and justify her empowerment to act against her husband and in the interests of her child.

Similarly, the inscription that Telethusa dedicates to the goddess after she has performed the miracle underscores female agency by once again making ritual and poetry analogous, or even interchangeable, terms:

> date munera templis,
> nec timida gaudete fide. dant munera templis,
> addunt et titulum; titulus breue carmen habebat:
> DONA · PVER · SOLVIT · QVAE ·FEMINA · VOVERAT · IPHIS (9.791–94)

> Give offerings to the temple, rejoice with faith that is not timid! They give offerings to the temple, they also add an inscription, and the inscription had a poem: IPHIS AS A BOY PAYS THE OFFERINGS WHICH SHE VOWED AS A GIRL.[30]

The inscription is a permanent commemoration of "the interchangeability of the male and female" (Hardie 2002: 250). But it also commemorates Telethusa's and Iphis' agency; Telethusa's in disobeying her husband, and Iphis'

in envisioning a relationship that transgresses gender and sexual norms. As Hardie notes, the text of the inscription reflects the doubleness and detachability inherent in Iphis' name placed at the end of the line; at the same time, the inscription commemorates the special relationship mother and daughter share with the goddess and thus their agency in defying established familial and gender protocols. Vocabulary belonging to poetry, writing, and ritual is put to work to convey the links between all three. The use of *titulus* ("inscription") and *carmen* ("poem/song") point to writing and to poetry respectively. The word *carmen*, a word also describing ritual incantations, is now used to commemorate Iphis' ritual act, just as Ovid's text commemorates her story. Similarly, the affinity between ritual and poetry is present in the repetition of *date munera templis / dant munera templis* and *titulum/titulus*, as such repetitions are common in ritual. As a result, ritual emerges as a space that affords women the power to question and confuse various identities, sexual, familial, ethnic. In this case, ritual is able to contain that confusion successfully.

In conclusion, women's rituals (prayer, supplication, wedding) in this episode offer opportunities for female empowerment that goes against a host of existing norms surrounding ethnicity, gender, and sexual identity. Recent studies on the role of women, family, and Augustan ideology have pointed out the increasing importance of women for a regime that is busy shaping an image of the state as an extension of the imperial *domus*.[31] Additionally, as many scholars have argued, this engagement with women's empowerment and disempowerment could be linked to a sense of impotence that Roman elites may have felt at the rise of the new Augustan regime and the centralized authority of the *princeps*. As the aristocratic males feel their right to self-determination threatened, they turn to other disenfranchised groups, such as women, to express the confusion and turmoil the new political situation has caused.

Although I share this view to a degree, I would like to suggest that there is more to this story than a certain optimism that male empowerment is again possible.[32] Isis' entirely beneficent presence points to her identity as a universal goddess, whose exotic and foreign elements do not jeopardize her ability to function in wholly appropriate ways within a Roman religious setting. The different ethnic identities operative in this story—Greek, Egyptian, Roman—only emphasize the universality of humanity, its love, desire, pain, and suffering. Telethusa and Iphis succeed in articulating alternative norms that, though eventually superseded by existing ones, still contribute to an outcome

that demonstrates the benefits of piety, motherhood, and humanity. The permanence of the inscription commemorating the women's transgression and its casting as analogous to poetic creation further elevates their agency to a higher plane and thus justifies it.

The exotic nature of the worship of Isis offers Ovid a unique opportunity to distance his narrative from Roman practices and thus create an illusion of unreality so that the transgressions at work do not seem threatening. At the same time, however, the growing popularity of the cult of Isis in Rome brings the story close to home. Isis, at once Egyptian and Roman, stands between the exotic and familiar, and therefore creates a space where explorations of transformation and change may occur. At a time of tremendous political, social, and religious change in Rome, this story considers how far established norms can be pressed. The episode's happy ending suggests that norms are indeed malleable, provided that certain values and practices remain intact: piety, respect for ritual correctness, sexual norms.

Like others before him, Ovid uses women's roles in the religious realm and their long history of contributions to the welfare of the Roman family and state in order to articulate alternatives to the familial, ideological, and ethnic questions that occupy Roman consciousness at this important historical time. In the next chapter, we will examine how wedding ritual is yet again used to reflect on the torrid changes of Neronian times.

Wartime Weddings

Lucan's *Civil War* and Seneca's *Trojan Women*

The previous chapters have shown that wedding ritual and the gender roles therein help articulate the function of the institution of the family in Rome. In Republican times, wedding songs such as those of Catullus highlight the important roles for women within the wedding protocol and link their ceremonial performance to the state's prosperity and progress. In Augustan times, authors like Ovid raise questions about the integrity of the Roman wedding by contemplating instabilities of identity that imperil normative performance of gender roles in the social setting. Ovid suggests that, through divine intervention, this risk can be averted.

By contrast, the present chapter expounds the view that in the literature of the Julio-Claudian period, wedding ritual is often distorted, reflecting the dissolute state of society and the state. In Lucan's *Bellum civile* (*Civil War; BC*) and Seneca's *Troades* (*Trojan Women*)—two roughly contemporary works that engage with the theme of war[1]—weddings are fraught with problems of perversion, as rituals are performed incorrectly and ritual purity is seriously compromised. Ritual perversion takes the form of the tragic motif of "marriage to death," that is, the conflation of elements properly belonging to the antithetical ceremonies of wedding and funeral. Ritual perversion therefore foreshadows, reflects, or intensifies the instability and disorder generated by the violence of war.

More specifically, Lucan presents women engaged in rites that mirror the disruption and crisis operative in the epic plot: instead of a union promoting life, the antiwedding of Cato and Marcia is sealed by death and mourning. The motif of marriage to death, well known from Greek tragedy, is also found in Seneca's tragedies articulating the destruction of Roman mores and the limited possibilities of agency for the vanquished, while promoting a superior moral code which denounces the cruelty and immorality of authority.

Both poets manipulate the motif of the conflation of wedding and funeral rites in order to cast women as active participants in war. Women embody the values of the Republic and thus express what is lost in the wake of civil war. By bringing to the foreground the distortion men have wrought on the institutions of marriage and family, the cornerstones of the Roman state, the women also illustrate the hopeless destruction of the other political institutions in Julio-Claudian Rome. Both Marcia and Polyxena exercise bonded agency (on this term, see introduction:8–9) and use the leverage of their social status as wives to castigate men's actions, which have led to war and destruction. In the process, they reconfigure their roles of wife and powerless victim and claim for themselves a higher moral ground. In these texts too, then, the welfare of marriage is closely linked to the welfare of the state, and women's ritual roles emerge as the repository of Roman ideals and values.

Lucan's *Bellum Civile*

Lucan's unfinished epic relates the civil war between Caesar and Pompey. Highly rhetorical and intense in movement, the poem paradoxically both laments and celebrates the disintegration of Roman values. *BC* showcases few female figures, most of whom have a marginal role in the thrust of the epic action.[2] Phemonoe and Erichtho appear in key episodes, while Pompey's wife, Cornelia, and the ghost of his dead wife, Julia, are featured in important scenes. As is the case in other epics, such as Vergil's *Aeneid*,[3] most of the epic's female figures are associated with ritual: Phemonoe is the Pythia of the Delphic oracle; Erichtho is a witch; Cornelia laments the death of her husband, Pompey. In all cases women's rituals are cast as utterly corrupt and fail to accomplish their purpose, since they are performed in ways that go egregiously against ritual custom and law. Ritual perversion in *BC* reflects the disintegration of all institutions that civil conflict brings about; moreover, nowhere in the poem is there any hope for restoration of the ritual (and by extension the sociopolitical) order. Marriage rites are no exception, as the brief episode of Cato and Marcia's wedding eloquently demonstrates.

These two figures envision their roles as husband and wife as a means of promoting their engagement in civil war. In Roman thought, familial ties are the cornerstone of social structures: the relationships among men of the state are regularly depicted as bonds of kinship; political alliances are often cemented through marriage. At the same time, the relationship of the leader of the state to his people is typically cast in the image of the *paterfamilias* ruling over his family. Within this ideological framework, it is no surprise

that *BC* dramatizes the paradox, ironies, and contradictions of fratricide in marriage ritual. Furthermore, the close association of ritual with the dissolution synonymous with civil war also portrays Marcia as an agent, a female empowered through ritual activity to seek actively what she wants, to criticize the male point of view that demands female objectification, and to impose her will on her husband. Marcia is able to succeed in her goals even though she never negates her role as wife or her bondedness to her husband. Despite her success, the point of view she articulates is as flawed as Cato's and indicates that the private realm cannot provide an appropriate model for political life. Civil war perverts the institution of family and irrevocably subsumes family ideals to the resulting madness and chaos.

Ritual perversion is signaled by the confusion of funeral and wedding rites. The representation of wedding as funeral is salient in Greek tragedy, where the crisis in the tragic plot often takes the form of ritual corruption in general and very often of marriage in particular. Distortion of marriage at times of war is especially common: for instance, in Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Iphigeneia, the daughter of King Agamemnon, dies at the altar of Artemis instead of being given in marriage; and in Euripides' *Hecuba*, the Trojan princess Polyxena, betrothed to Achilles, becomes a funeral offering at his tomb.[4] The same motif resurfaces in Seneca's *Troades*: Polyxena's sacrifice is represented as marriage to the dead Achilles and constitutes a central event in the series of inversions that mark the general state of dissolution that the play deplores.[5]

In *BC* Lucan appropriates these literary motifs in the episode of the remarriage of Cato and Marcia. Although this wedding does not draw on the tragic motif of the perverted wedding in the Greek and Senecan tragedies, it mobilizes a similar type of perversion, since standard features of marriage ritual are replaced by others appropriate for funerals. Furthermore, the absence of a number of customary wedding ritual practices jeopardizes ritual correctness, since it causes the bride and the groom to violate cautionary and protective ritual measures. At the same time, this wedding aims to unite Marcia and Cato in war and destruction and negates the creation of offspring, which is the primary reason for entering marital life and which would guarantee Rome's future.

The historical background surrounding Cato and Marcia's marriage provided Lucan with ample potential for manipulation: In 56 BCE the orator Hortensius asked Cato to give him his daughter, Porcia, in marriage. Since Porcia was already married, Cato eventually agreed to divorce his own wife, Marcia, so that she could marry Hortensius. Plutarch (*Cato Minor* 52) reports that

when Hortensius died, Cato remarried Marcia (by then very rich) just before he left Rome with the Pompeians, because he needed someone to look after his household and young daughters.[6] In his rendition, Lucan has Marcia enter in ritual mourning garb, straight from the funeral of her husband Hortensius:

> miserando concita uultu,
> effusas laniata comas contusaque pectus
> uerberibus crebris cineresque ingesta sepulchri. (2.334–36)
>
> She hurried with a mournful face
> her loosened hair torn and her breast bruised
> by continual beatings and covered with ashes from the tomb.

Marcia's bridal attire is that of a mourning wife. While in funeral ritual mourners express squalor by smearing symbolic ash on their foreheads, Marcia has covered herself with cremated ashes (Fantham 1992a: 141–42), which serve as her only bridal decoration. She goes on to ask Cato to marry her in order to regain "the empty name of marriage" (*nomen inane/conubii*, 342–43).[7] Emptiness characterizes Marcia, as she is no longer able to bear children. In this regard, she reverses the tragic model of marriage to death: whereas in tragedy the bride is usually a virgin whose death negates the natural process of procreation, in *BC* Marcia wishes to marry Cato, not for the purpose of childbearing, but only to be buried as his wife, to be permanently known as belonging to him (*Catonis/Marcia*, 343–44).[8] In this instance, Marcia claims for herself the role of *uniuira*, a woman who has never been divorced or a widow who did not remarry. This ideal is connected with the early beginnings of Rome (Rudd 1990: 154–59). In claiming the role of *uniuira* for herself, Marcia acts as a guardian of Roman ideals. Yet by only partially fulfilling the role of the wife, she simultaneously negates the salient function of marriage as a social institution, which is the production of citizens for the state. Marcia thus articulates a version of the institution that goes against normative ideology, even as she ostensibly celebrates established Roman ideals.

On closer scrutiny, Marcia's request to remarry reveals that ritual perversion is accompanied by transgression of gender roles: Marcia comes unannounced, acts as her own marriage broker (Fantham 1992a: 140), and renounces her past treatment as an object of exchange for the production of male offspring.[9] Her past is marked by passivity, embedded in passive verb forms in the text that reports her history (*iuncta*, 329; *datur*, 332; *exhausta*, 340; *tradenda*, 341; *expulsa an tradita*, 345). The only active role assigned to

her is that of procreation and of uniting households (*impletura*, 332; *permixtura domos*, 333). Marcia's transformation from a passive object and a vessel for the bearing of children to an agent is indicated by her violent motion (*irrupit*, 328), a violence which is often associated with female grief and which has the potential to erupt and threaten male authority.[10] In her speech she associates obedience to her husband with her ability to bear children (*dum uis materna, peregi/iussa*, 338–39) but declares that, now that she is no longer a vehicle for the creation of children, she will be the one to set the terms of their new relationship. At this precise moment her language bears ritual echoes: the triple anaphora (*da foedera . . . tori*, 341–42 [grant the ties of marriage]; *da tantum nomen inane/conubii*, 342–43 [grant only the empty name of marriage]; *da mihi castra sequi*, 348 [allow me to accompany the troops]) points to ritual incantations, where triple repetition is a standard feature.[11] Marcia's "emancipation" is thus accompanied by a critique of her husband's past treatment of herself and their family and by a desire to set things right (*nec dubium longo quaeratur in aeuo/mutarim primas expulsa an tradita taedas*, 344–45 [nor let it remain in doubt in the future whether I changed my first marriage due to divorce or exchange]). She thus emerges as the guardian of social traditions that men have allowed to disintegrate.

By reprising her role as Cato's wife, Marcia thus repurposes both wedding ritual and the institution of marriage. Her transgressive stance, however, assuming a voice at the precise moment where her ability to procreate is at an end, is far from conventional. Marcia thus oscillates between roles that are at once traditional and nonconforming. On the one hand, she, like many other women in Roman history (Lucretia, the Sabine women, Cornelia), acts as a champion of state ideals when men have failed them. On the other hand, she ventures to the public arena and radically refashions the role of wife. In this light, her agency is bonded, in that it conforms to normative views of the role of the wife, but also transgressive, in that it negates procreation as her defining characteristic.

Marcia carries her point, and Cato silently accepts her proposition (*hae flexere uirum uoces*, 350), although the wedding is inappropriate under the circumstances (350–53). But if Cato's priorities are confused, so are Marcia's. The motivation behind her transgression of gender boundaries and her eagerness to preserve social stability and long-revered Roman values prove to be superficial and secondary to a desire to participate actively in civil war (*da mihi castra sequi*, 348) and play a role in the conflict as central as that of Cornelia (*sit ciuili propior Cornelia bello?* 349 [why should Cornelia be closer

to civil war?]).[12] Marcia engages in a competition with other wives at war, the same type of rivalry that caused fratricide among the men in the first place. As a result, Marcia articulates a point of view that initially appears as aiming to correct, but ends up replicating, the destructive male attitudes that caused civil war. The perverted wedding rite she performs underscores her desire to participate in carnage, a desire that matches that of her husband.

The ensuing description of the wedding reveals striking similarities between husband and wife. The poignant ironies of the elaborate description of what the ritual does *not* include, along with the use of elements normally associated with funeral,[13] emphasize the disintegration of religious and social institutions. Social dissolution is also evident in the mirroring of husband and wife, who envision their marital roles as enabling them to become enmeshed in civil war. This mirroring is manifest in a number of narrative elements: their mourning attire (334–36 and 375–76); their characterization as *sancti* (327, 372), a word deeply ironic given their involvement in civil conflict; the celebration of a marriage that negates sexual pleasure (342–44 and 378–80) and the ability to bear children. Ritual correctness is further denied, as the narrative implies that the bride steps over the threshold (358–59), a particularly ominous sign.[14] As a result, Marcia's empowerment through ritual activity fails to articulate a viable alternative to her husband's cause but renders her instead a complement to his persona. The flawed ritual, along with the confusion of marriage and funeral rites, highlights the deeply disturbing nature of their fervor to participate in civil war. Cato and Marcia's mirroring thus adds the blurring of gender lines to the epic's central themes of general dissolution of boundaries and loss of identity. At the same time, it confirms that Cato and Marcia's social roles as husband and wife are now in the service of civil conflict. The bankruptcy of family ideals is thus symbolically grafted onto Marcia's drained body,[15] their failure as transparent as that of all other social and political institutions.

Attention to the corrupt nature of this marriage ritual also informs our reading of Cato's portrait as a noble and heroic persona.[16] His choice to perform a distorted rite underscores his active participation in the dissolution of religious (wedding) and social (family) institutions and emphasizes the irony in his portrayal as a *paterfamilias*, since he enters a marriage that will not result in children. Thus Marcia's sterility is equivalent to his desire to achieve liberty in death (Ahl 1976: 249–51), which only manages to perpetuate corruption, emptiness, and futility. Cato's Stoicism becomes a paradox in itself, pushed to its limits and therefore rendered absurd. In *BC* ritual

corruption reflects the devastation of civil war. Marcia may claim agency through her role in the wedding ceremony, but she fails to provide an alternative to Cato for ending the corruption generated by civil conflict. As husband and wife, they both embrace and even celebrate the destruction of the social fabric. In the following section we shall see that Seneca uses the ritual framework of the wedding in a similar manner to focus on the victims of war. His use of the motif, however, not only illuminates the constraints on the vanquished but also suggests that victims of war can reclaim their agency, even if they are eventually silenced by absolute authority.

Seneca's *Troades*: Marriage to Death and the Triumph of the Victim

Seneca's tragedies rely intertextually on their Greek counterparts not only for their plot but also as a larger framework of symbolic representation, including the use of the well-known motif of marriage to death.[17] Roman authors before Seneca also made use of this motif and have undoubtedly provided an additional layer of intertextual contact.[18] Seneca's originality lies in his successful blending of the rhetorical aesthetic of his time, the reworking of the themes and anxieties of the Greek tragedies to express Roman realities, and the infusion of Stoic and other philosophical problems and questions into the dilemmas and flaws of his tragic heroes and heroines. *Troades* is a tragedy that illustrates these qualities in its treatment of marriage in times of war.[19] Polyxena's sacrifice, cast as a "wedding" to the shade of Achilles, demonstrates the distortion of ritual, castigates the abuse of power, and celebrates traditional Roman values.

Seneca's *Troades* focuses on the fate of the victims of war, namely Hecuba, Polyxena, Andromache, and Astyanax. Although Hecuba is the towering figure framing the play and embodying tragic loss, the action focuses on two deaths, those of Astyanax and Polyxena. In one of the play's most important scenes, a debate between Pyrrhus and Agamemnon, Pyrrhus states his wish to sacrifice Polyxena in order to appease the shade of his father, Achilles. Agamemnon tries to convince him not to do it, himself having experienced the consequences of such barbaric action after he sacrificed his daughter Iphigeneia. Calchas sides decisively with Pyrrhus, declaring that fate has decreed that Polyxena should die. Meanwhile, Andromache, in an effort to save her son from Ulysses, hides Astyanax in Hector's tomb. The Greek hero, however, forces her to reveal the boy by threatening to defile the tomb. Once again cruelty is justified, this time by Ulysses, who attributes the demand for

the death of Astyanax to the Fates. A messenger relates the details of the deaths of Astyanax and Polyxena, showcasing their heroism at the moment of death. Hecuba is now bereft of all her kin, and she ends the play by declaring the end of the war.

By naming his play *Troades*, Seneca points his audience to Euripides' play of the same name; the author, however, also mobilizes intertextual contact with Euripides' *Hecuba*, which focuses on the Trojan queen's revenge for the murder of her son Polydorus. Seneca includes a debate in which the Greek side argues over the fate of the captives, a debate that also takes place in Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis*. But unlike Euripides' Iphigeneia, who goes to her death willingly, Polyxena's death is anything but voluntary.

The motif of marriage to death permeates Seneca's *Troades*, especially at the play's climax, where Polyxena is sacrificed at the tomb of the dead Achilles. The perversion of wedding ritual is closely linked to the play's major themes: the disintegration of a civilization, that is, of social, political, and familial relations; the recycling of perverted rituals through time; and the continual process of dissolution extending over past, present, and future. The play also explores the callousness of those in power and the arbitrariness of the divine, both of which collude in implementing barbarism (Boyle 1994: 21). Finally, it poignantly dramatizes the triumph of the victim and the defeated, who find freedom and moral transcendence in death.

In what follows, I examine the use of the motif of marriage to death in the treatment of the death of Polyxena. Although the heroine herself does not speak, her resistance to the victor and the defiance with which she faces her death render her a paragon of bravery.[20] The tragedy of her plight focuses on the horrific reversal of social norms: instead of assuming the role of bride to a living man, she is condemned to be a bride of Achilles in Hades. Even in her diminished status as a female and a captive, her defiant demeanor constitutes an example of agency. Polyxena submits to the ritual that dictates her demise, but her consent is deeply "negotiated" in that she does not conform to behavior expected of a female captive. Far from acting terrified, Polyxena exhibits great bravery as she meets her death and thus makes a compelling statement to those in power. The focus on Polyxena during this distorted wedding ceremony helps emphasize her ability to exercise agency under impossible constraints and casts her as a superior moral subject against barbaric slayers.

Polyxena's "marriage" to the dead Achilles is not simply a private drama of a young virgin who dies prematurely, but the focal point of a play dramatizing the horrors of war and the callousness of those in power. The destruc-

tion of Troy is denoted not only by the destruction of its buildings, the killing of its men, and the enslavement of its women, but by the disintegration of religious and social institutions. A wedding, a ceremony that is supposed to promote life, is shown to cause destruction and death. The devastation of the city provides the venue and the accoutrements for this ceremony. Andromache eloquently ties wedding ritual with the death of Polyxena and the destruction of Troy:

> hoc derat unum Phrygibus euersis malum,
> gaudere—flagrant strata passim Pergama:
> o coniugale tempus! An quisquam audeat
> negare? quisquam dubius *ad thalamos* eat,
> quos Helena suadet? pestis exitium lues
> utriusque populi, cernis hos tumulos ducum
> et nuda totis ossa quae passim iacent
> inhumata campis? haec *hymen* sparsit tuus. . . .
>
> thalamos appara.
> taedis quid opus est quidue sollemni *face*?
> quid igne? thalamis Troia praelucet nouis.
> celebrate Pyrrhi, Troades, conubia,
> celebrate digne: planctus et gemitus sonet. (888–902)
>
> This one evil was lacking to the ruined Trojans,
> to rejoice. Troy's ruins lie blazing all around:
> great time for a wedding! Would anyone dare
> refuse? Would anyone hesitate to enter a *marriage*
> that Helen proposes? You plague, destruction, pest
> of both peoples, do you see these tombs of leaders
> and the bare bones of so many lying all over the plain
> unburied? These your *wedding* has scattered. . . .
>
> Deck the bridal chamber.
> Who needs the marriage brands or the ritual *torch*?
> Who needs fire? Troy provides the light for this strange marriage.
> Celebrate Pyrrhus' wedding, Trojan women,
> Celebrate properly: let blows and groans resound.

Andromache uses irony, paradox, and a host of wedding ritual elements to underscore the link between marriage and war. Helen's "marriage" to Paris

caused the destruction of Troy. The reversal of marriage to death is emphasized by the triple repetition of *thalamus* in Andromache's speech (891, 898, 900), balanced by a triple repetition of words describing wedding torches (*taedis . . . face*, 899; *igne*, 900).[21] Andromache's use of the term *hymen* (895), a term familiar from wedding hymns, highlights the irony of Polyxena's proposed union with Pyrrhus. At the same time, we see a reversal of the emotions appropriate to wedding ritual, as Polyxena's marriage becomes an occasion for lamentation (901–02).[22]

Such ritual reversals and perversions create paradoxical familial relations: when Helen a moment earlier relates the advantages of a marriage between Polyxena and Pyrrhus, she effects a "drastic reordering of kinship" (Wilson 1983: 38) by naming the ancestry of Achilles and Pyrrhus (Tethys, Thetis, Peleus, and Nereus) as now constituting Polyxena's family (879–82).[23] As a result, Pyrrhus will be the son-in-law of his victim Priam and of Hecuba, before whose eyes he murdered her husband: *leuiora mala sunt cuncta, quam Priami gener/ Hecubaeque Pyrrhus* (all evils are lesser than that Pyrrhus should be son-in-law to Priam and Hecuba; 934–35).

Paradoxical family relations in times of conflict are common in narratives of war, and civil war in particular, and reflect the crisis of social and political institutions. In Seneca's play, the private and familial are linked with the public and the political (Lawall 1982: 252; Bishop 1972: 334, 336). The figure of Hecuba is a case in point: when Hecuba opens the prologue of the play, she speaks as a wife and a queen; the destruction of Troy is also the destruction of her family.[24] The Trojan war is a metaphor not simply for war in general but for a social and political reality in crisis.

Polyxena's marriage to death serves to underscore the crisis itself as well as the lack of any resolution or restoration of the disrupted social, religious, and political order within which the play unfolds. Throughout the play, Polyxena's death evokes two prior examples of perverted sacrifice: that of Iphigeneia (248–49) and Priam's murder at his own household altar (44–56; 310–13). These instances have also a rich literary pedigree: the former from Greek tragedy and the latter in a succession of Roman texts, the most celebrated of which is Vergil's *Aeneid* (2.501–02). This linkage of perverted rituals past and present is part of a rhetorical *topos* that sheds light on Pyrrhus' character (Wilson 1983: 37). But it also suggests a process that repeats itself without any hope of end or restoration. The textual repetition and continuation achieved through an amalgam of literary *topoi* is thus manipulated to dem-

onstrate the permanence of ritual perversion and, by extension, the ceaseless disintegration of civilized life.[25]

The recycling of perverted rituals is due to both the callousness of those in power and the cruel arbitrariness of the divine. The *agôn* between Pyrrhus and Agamemnon eloquently demonstrates the cynicism of the powerful victor (Wilson 1983: 37–38). Agamemnon, whose past experience and mistakes seem to have made him more compassionate, argues against human sacrifice (330, 334). Pyrrhus, on the other hand, is a cynic who dismisses the moral principles of compassion and mercy (329, 333, 335), and is quick to point out the irony of Agamemnon's defense of Polyxena when he sacrificed his own daughter, Iphigeneia (*iamne immolari uirgines credis nefas?* [so now you consider it a sin to sacrifice virgins?]; 331). While Agamemnon attempts to dissociate himself from his image as a father who slaughtered his daughter by offering the dubious excuse that he was acting for the benefit of his country (332), Pyrrhus dwells on Agamemnon's past behavior in order to legitimize his proposed course of action. As a result, Pyrrhus and Agamemnon emerge as mirror images of each other, two leaders who have put their power to base ends.

Their *agôn* reaches a moral impasse that is resolved by the prophecy of Calchas. The seer represents a higher authority, a *deus ex machina* of sorts, who, unlike his Euripidean counterparts, lays down a savage law and licenses the powerful Greeks to commit further atrocities:

> dant fata Danais *quo* <u>*solent*</u> pretio uiam:
> mactanda uirgo est Thessali busto ducis;
> sed *quo* iugari Thessalae cultu <u>*solent*</u>
> Ionidesue uel Mycenaeae nurus,
> Pyrrhus parenti coniugem <u>*tradat*</u> suo:
> sic *rite* dabitur. (360–65)

> Fate grants the Greeks passage at the *usual* price:
> a virgin must be sacrificed at the tomb of the Thessalian chief;
> but in the *usual* dress of brides
> from Thessaly, Ionia, or Mycenae,
> let Pyrrhus *hand* the wife to his father:
> thus she will be wed according to *ritual custom*.

The use of *solent* (360) to describe fate's role in times of war and crisis casts both the divine and the Greeks in the role of permanent aggressor. The

reiterated *solent* (362), now referring to ritual custom, links the Greeks' renewed aggression with ritual repetition. The violence of the divine causes ritual perversion and perpetuates a cycle of destruction that is not destined to end.[26]

Calchas sides with Pyrrhus in dictating the barbarous sacrifice of Polyxena, and Agamemnon does not challenge him. The arbitrary cruelty of the divine matches that of Pyrrhus. As a result, ritual acts, usually thought of as ensuring communication and exchange with the divine and providing hope and comfort in an uncertain world, have now lost their meaning. Their distortion reflects not only the disintegration of a society but also the callous nature of its gods.

Polyxena's marriage to death (942–44) thus dramatizes both the problematic nature of a society on the verge of a breakdown and the individual's response to the ethical challenges placed before her. Polyxena goes to her death with a nobility and courage that contrast sharply with the passivity of those watching her end:[27]

> *audax* uirago non tulit retro gradum;
> conuersa ad ictum stat *truci* uultu *ferox*.
> tam *fortis animus* omnium mentes *ferit*,
> *nouumque monstrum* est Pyrrhus ad caedem piger.
> ut dextra ferrum penitus exactum abdidit,
> subitus recepta morte prorupit cruor
> per uulnus ingens. nec tamen moriens adhuc
> *deponit animos*: cecidit, ut Achilli gravem
> factura terram, prona et *irato impetu*. (1151–59)

> The *bold* virgin did not step back.
> Facing the stroke she stands *fierce* with a *grim* look.
> Such a *brave spirit strikes* everyone's heart
> and, a *strange portent*, Pyrrhus is slow to kill.
> When his hand buried the sword thrust deep,
> a sudden gush of blood streamed from the huge wound
> as she embraced death. Not even in death
> does she *lose* her *courage*. To make the earth
> heavy on Achilles, she fell forward with *angry force*.

Polyxena's self-control and defiant demeanor at the time of death are emphasized in the text (*truci uultu*, *ferox*, *fortis animus*). Her obvious lack of consent

in the proceedings is itself portrayed as capable of violence (*ferit*), while her moral superiority is likened to a supernatural force (*nouum monstrum*) causing hesitation in her slayer, Pyrrhus.[28] Just as Hecuba in the opening of the play claimed control of her victimhood when she asserted that the fall of Troy is her responsibility (36–40; see Wilson 1983: 49–51), so Polyxena asserts her agency even under the dire constraints placed upon her as a female prisoner of war. Her last act of disobedience, her angry fall (*prona et irato impetu*), render her triumphant in this final moment of the play. The moral transcendence gained with death endows the individual with a secure, stable sense of self and contrasts with the perverted nature of the ritual that takes her life. The description of Polyxena's death concludes with an emphasis on ritual correctness (*hic ordo sacri* [this was the rite's sequence]; 1162), paradoxically underscoring the fact that, despite the victor's assertion to the contrary, these rites have been defiled and stripped of their meaning (Boyle 1994: 232). Far from asserting the control of the Greeks over the Trojans, the ritual proclaims the callousness of the victor and sows the seed for future opposition.

Both resolution and restoration are wholly absent from the play, which ends with the messenger's order to the captive women *repetite . . . maria* (make for the sea once again; 1178). The idea of repetition points to the Trojan women's previous journeys in other renditions of the story (Boyle 1994: 233), as well as to the repetition of the perverted sacrifices therein. In a world where the powerful are free to do as they please, the victim's brave defiance of death is the only stance that offers stable, if unavailing, moral ground.[29]

Since Troy is a prototype for Rome, the resonances of the play for the Rome of the time of Nero are plain to see. The victims of authority are women, who nevertheless find ways to resist or transcend the constraints imposed on them. Even in their final defeat, they exemplify an alternative attitude, which, futile though it may be, points to the flaws of the order that demands their demise. The resonance of the performative role of women in wedding ritual therefore provides the impetus for a focus on the victim, offering her defiance and bravery as the ultimate act of resistance and moral transcendence in the face of a barbaric authority (such as Nero). In the next chapter, we shall see that Seneca's contemporary Petronius similarly uses the perversion of wedding ritual to explore the individual's relationship with power. He does so, however, by comically displaying the fragility of masculinity: the women now stand for the emperor, exerting absolute power over feminized men in an increasingly topsy-turvy world.

Quartilla's Priapic Weddings in Petronius' *Satyrica*

Female Power and Male Impotence

In one of the most interesting episodes in Petronius' *Satyrica*, Quartilla's orchestration of a wedding forms the climax in a series of rites dedicated to the phallic god Priapus. Petronius spares no comic or satiric device in creating an atmosphere of fantasy and spectacle. He invites his readers to participate in a voyeuristic journey, to witness things not meant to be seen: Priapus' mysteries. Sex and violence are key elements in this episode, with ritual providing the context within which they unfold. Quartilla, the priestess of Priapus, is an all-powerful agent who completely dominates the novel's male protagonists, Encolpius and Ascyltos.

This chapter continues to examine weddings in Roman literature and offers a brief case study of female ritual activity as enabling female power. We have seen that women's roles in wedding rituals help articulate a measure of subjectivity and agency that is potentially threatening to a patriarchal status quo or proposes alternative attitudes vis-à-vis an increasingly authoritarian state. Quartilla's religious identity as a priestess of Priapus is a vehicle through which the voracious female sexual appetite is given free rein, results in a sustained asymmetry between the sexes, and aims to destroy the integrity of male sexuality and identity.[1]

In this episode, the disempowerment of men is as consistent as it is devastating because it involves their inability not only to perform sexually but also to exercise their free will. The women derive their power from their identity as priestesses of Priapus and masters of ceremonies. Quartilla operates through rituals and controls all rituals. As befits Priapus, these involve the domains of sex and marriage, which are traditionally feminine. I argue that Quartilla's religious identity is an empowering force, abetting the destruction of male sexual agency and potency. Unlike previous authors, in whose works Roman elite males appear to use feminine empowerment in order to negotiate their role within a turbulent sociopolitical environment,

Petronius presents disempowered, impotent males as victims of a distorted world, where female agency is a grotesque bully analogous to the emperor's absolutism.

The framework of mystery ritual propels the episode into action. Intertextual references link it to epic and tragic modes, where religious solemnity is paramount, and the joyful parody of these genres contributes to the novel's biting satire and wit. As scholars have noted, in the role as priestess of Priapus in Cumae, Quartilla mocks Vergil's Sibyl (Walsh 1970: 89, Connors 1998: 33–36) and strengthens the novel's likening of Encolpius to Aeneas. Work on other points of contact with Roman comedy and mime have done much to advance our understanding of the theatrical nature of the narrative (e.g. Slater 1990: 38–49, Panayotakis 1995: 31–51, Courtney 2001: 65–71). Other studies have also greatly illuminated the contours of the *peruigilium Priapi* within which the episode unfolds and its relationship to the various adventures that befall our heroes, Encolpius and Ascyltos.[2] For instance, when they incur various punishments at the hands of Quartilla and her servants, we are meant to understand that they are undergoing a mystery initiation, which often involved the humiliation of the initiands (Burkert 1987: 102–04). In what follows, I focus on the role of the women and the power they exhibit within the framework of ritual.[3] The asymmetry of power between the sexes does not, however, indicate an imminent reversal of Encolpius' impotence after his successful initiation or a restoration of the proper sexual order with the scene of the wedding. Quite the contrary: as the climax of the mysteries, the wedding provides evidence for his symbolic castration and perpetuates his impotence and disempowerment (even though it is not permanent, as Encolpius states later in 140.12–13).[4]

I begin by examining how various religious and ritual frameworks set the stage for the appearance of Quartilla. These are never completely divorced from the novel's play on various literary genres and dismantling of canons. I then turn to the narrative's depiction of women as sexual aggressors, a category that includes *cinaedi* and perhaps eunuchs. I end with an analysis of the ritual of the *hieros gamos* of the young virgin Pannychis with Giton with an aim at demonstrating that it perpetuates the power dynamic outlined in the episode and targets male sexual integrity and identity. The chapter concludes by positing a link between this comic sexual reversal and the problem of maintaining the integrity of the self in the sociopolitical milieu of the Neronian era.

The God Priapus and His Mysteries

Priapus is an ithyphallic god, son of Dionysus by a nymph or Aphrodite.[5] He first appears in texts of the fourth century BCE, and his cult comes from the region of Lampsacus on the Hellespont. Priapus is associated with fertility, sexuality, gardens, and herds. His popularity in Rome was great, and his image often appears in gardens or houses and enjoys offerings of fruit, vegetables, and flowers, although animal sacrifices are also attested. The god is mostly known through a collection of poems called the *Priapea*. These poems either are addressed to Priapus, spoken by the god, or invoking him. We have them in the form of Hellenistic epigrams, but in Rome the genre was further developed to include themes of the god's sexual aggression towards transgressors, who were punished with rape. A collection of eighty poems known as *Carmina Priapea* or *Corpus Priapeorum* forms our main body of works associated with the god in Latin literature. They may have been written by a single author and are traditionally dated to a period spanning from the beginning of the Augustan era (31 BCE-14 CE) to around 100 CE. The poems are characterized by extreme obscenity, yet they also constitute a highly self-conscious parody, exploiting the tension between the sophistication of the literary form and the vulgarity of the subject matter, much like Petronius' *Satyrica*.

Richlin's study of Roman sexual humor has done much to illustrate the role of Priapus in Rome through a feminist methodological lens. She has demonstrated that the god stands for a personified phallus and represents a hypertrophied masculinity to the world, penetrating all his victims, male or female (1992b: 57–63). In Quartilla's episode, Priapus' masculinity, I argue, is actually put to work to serve the women, who are thus rendered all-powerful. They crush the men symbolically, by removing all agency from them, and sexually, by taking over the active sexual role and rendering them impotent. Quartilla and her servants are not mere stereotypes of the sex-crazed women, as most scholars believe (Richlin 2009: 89), but wield their ritual and sexual power to deprive men of their masculine selves. As a result, they present striking parallels to the figure of the emperor, whose powers have similarly devastating effects on the Roman elite male self in the first century CE.

Before I analyze the role of women in this episode, it is instructive to note that the episode is structured in a way that reflects known happenings in mystery or initiation cults. For instance, Encolpius and Ascyltos are subject to a series of punishments, many of which include rape, the hallmark of Pri-

apic vengeance. Punishments such as binding or flagellation are also attested in other mystic contexts (Burkert 1987: 102–04). The drinking of *satyrion* (an aphrodisiac potion possibly made of orchid root)[6] recalls the consumption of druglike substances in other mystery rites (Burkert 1987: 102–03, 108–09). After the preliminary ceremonies are completed, a banquet often ensues, as is the case here.[7] Drinking also occurs, especially in a Bacchic context (Burkert 1987: 111–12). Initiation rites often culminated in a *hieros gamos* in which the initiand was imagined as being in a sexual union with the god (Burkert 1987: 106); the wedding between Giton and Pannychis fits this scheme neatly. Petronius uses the recognizable structure of mystery rites as a basis for the events in this episode, providing humor and parody for his readers' amusement. In the process, he makes a poignant commentary on the status of masculinity. In the following sections, I describe how the correlation between ritual structure and female power operates to expose anxieties over the integrity of the male self in Neronian Rome.

The Religious Framework: Divine Epiphany and Supplication

Despite the fragmentary nature of the episode, ritualistic elements abound and attest to the importance of the Priapic religious framework for its satirical impact, narrative structure, and content.[8] The motif of religious epiphany (analyzed in detail by Weinreich 1929) foreshadows and underscores the power differential between the male characters and the female representatives of the god. Quartilla is invested with quasi-divine qualities as she makes her entrance into the narrative. Encolpius, Ascyltos, and Giton hear a sudden banging of the door, which eventually opens on its own, as if by a miracle (*sera sua sponte delapsa cecidit reclusaeque subito fores admiserunt intrantem*, 16.2 [the bar slipped and fell on its own accord, and the door suddenly opened and let her in]).[9]

Divine epiphany is thought to occur frequently in the context of ritual. The theme is at work in the servant's address to Encolpius and his companions. More specifically, her exclamation *ecce ipsa venit* (16.4) recalls the phrase the Sibyl utters when she feels the presence of Apollo in Vergil's *Aeneid* (*deus ecce deus*, 6.46).[10] Similarly, the expression *nolite perturbari* has ritual connotations as an injunction to the participants before the appearance of a deity.[11] Quartilla's maid thus plays the role of the hierophant, while Quartilla herself stands for the deity (Schmeling 2011: 48).[12]

Despite her role as *uates*, Quartilla begins her address to Encolpius and Ascyltos as a suppliant. Quartilla's position is one of utter powerlessness,

depending completely on the goodwill of the *supplicandi*: she claims that her life or death (and in this case the life or death of the mysteries) is at the hands of Encolpius and Ascyltos.[13] Her "illness" (*tertiana*, 17.7) is an extension of her suppliant status, a physical manifestation in her body of the danger the mysteries face as a result of the heroes' transgression. If we look closely, however, we see that Quartilla's dominance is not seriously disturbed. Although her supplication is occasioned by Encolpius' and Ascyltos' knowledge of Priapus' mysteries (which they presumably learned in an episode lost from the text).[14] The supplication is not devoid of threat: unlike other suppliants, whose only leverage is an appeal to the mercy and clemency of the *supplicandus*, Quartilla can threaten with the punishment inflicted on those who divulge the gods' mysteries.

The use of ritual language, which until now seemed to enhance the parody, turns out to ensure the reality of the threat of punishment. Quartilla is indeed a priestess, and, as we have seen, a priestess intertextually drawing on the authority of the Sibyl. As such, she has the power to get her god to inflict harm on the transgressors. In fact, this is precisely the first assurance her servant gives to Encolpius and Ascyltos: *nec accusat errorem uestrum, nec punit*, 16.4 (she neither blames you for your blunder nor does she wish to punish you). The effect of the servant's words on the transgressors is silence (*tacentibus adhuc nobis*), while Quartilla's entrance, in the guise of a divine epiphany, is equally powerful. Encolpius and Ascyltos witness her weeping thunderstruck (*attoniti*, 17.2). Quartilla's tears are also intertextually invested with supernatural power, as they are likened to Juno's storm in *Aeneid* 1: *ut ergo tam ambitiosus detumuit imber*, 17.3 (when such an ostentatious rainfall had finally subsided; see also Schmeling 2011: 47–48). Her intertextual kinship with Vergilian figures of religious power and authority, such as the Sibyl and Juno, confirms her position of dominance.[15]

Quartilla repeatedly stresses the punishment awaiting transgressors of mysteries:

> "quaenam est" inquit "haec audacia, aut ubi fabulas etiam antecessura latrocinia didicistis? misereor mediusfidius uestri; neque enim impune quisquam quod non licuit adspexit. . . . ac ne me putetis ultionis causa huc venisse, aetate magis uestra commoueor quam iniuria mea. imprudentes enim ut adhuc puto, admisistis inexpiabile scelus." (17.4–6)

> "What kind of audacity is this?" she said, "and where did you learn to rival the robbers of the myths? By god, I pity you; for no one looks with impunity

> on what is forbidden. . . . And don't you think that I came here for revenge; I am more moved by compassion for your youth than by your insult to me. For you fools, as I think, have committed a crime that cannot be expiated."

Quartilla does not need to give more specifics to her audience. Everyone knows from myth the devastating punishment awaiting people who saw—by accident or on purpose—what they should not have seen. Actaeon and Pentheus died horrible deaths;[16] Tiresias was blinded.[17] Moreover, Quartilla's use of the expression *mediusfidius* is significant in this regard. An exclamation mainly used by men (Hofmann 1978: 30), it belies her ultimate position of power. Commentators note that, as a dominating woman, she is entitled to use it.[18] As a result, despite her suppliant status, her tears, and physical ailment, Quartilla repeatedly asserts her power in order to alternatively coax and intimidate the men so as to make them submit to an initiation and force them not to reveal the secret rites.[19]

Female Sexual Aggression

Quartilla's power is nowhere exhibited more forcefully—or more comically—than in the sexual aggression she consistently exhibits. Female sexual aggression in general is prominent throughout the episode and goes hand in hand with its general asymmetry of gender power relations.[20] Here every female character is sexually aggressive, attacking men with kisses, manipulating their genitals, binding them, pricking them, and even raping them (with the aid of *cinaedi*).[21] Quartilla, for instance, showers Encolpius with kisses when he agrees not to reveal the god's secrets (*mulier basiauit me spissius*, 18.4). Although the subject of the following verb is uncertain, it is most probably a female figure—perhaps the servant mentioned in the previous fragment or even Quartilla herself—who touches Encolpius' groin in an attempt to cure him of his impotence: *sollicitauit inguina mea mille iam mortibus frigida*, 20.2 (she tried to rouse my groin, which by now had died a thousand deaths); and another young girl—perhaps Pannychis?—kisses Giton (20.8).[22] Her actions denote military violence, whereas the male character does not fight back (*uirguncula ceruicem eius* inuasit *et* non repugnanti puero *innumerabilia oscula dedit*, 20.8 [the little virgin *attacked* his neck and gave countless kisses *to the young man, who was not resisting*]). The man's lack of resistance ostensibly denotes Giton's comical welcoming of the girl's sexual overtures, but it also implies that he assumes the passive, feminine sexual role. The text's reference to Giton as *puer* further underscores that he has

not quite yet attained the status of an adult male and that, much like women, he has the status of a perpetual minor.[23]

In addition, Quartilla exhibits sexual aggression toward Giton, who is thus feminized for a second time along with the other men: *uocatumque ad se in osculum applicuit. mox manum etiam demisit in sinum et pertractato uasculo tam rudi,* 24.6–7 (she called him over to her and leaned on him for a kiss. Soon she even lowered her hand into his lap and felt his young vessel). Giton's vessel is *rudis,* a word that can mean "new," "young," but also "untried," "not yet sailed on" (as in the case of the Argo in Catullus 64.11).[24] As a result, the narrator here hints at Giton's potential virginity, a quality normally important for a woman, not a man. The feminization of all three men in this episode is thus heavy-handed, expressed by the impotence of Encolpius, the passivity of Ascyltos (whether he is sexually attacked or sleeping), and in Giton's lack of resistance to or inexperience with women's sexual advances.

The women also make use of phallic objects that complement their sexual aggression: Psyche uses a hairpin to prick Encolpius' cheeks (*acu comatoria . . . malas pungebat,* 21.1), while another woman employs a painter's brush to tackle Ascyltos (*illinc puella penicillo . . . Ascylton opprimebat,* 21.1). Notice once again the use of military and violent language to convey the connotations of power inherent in the women's actions (*pungebat, opprimebat*). Phallic symbols serve a similar function: as Ascyltos lies unconscious, a woman paints his shoulders and sides with phallic symbols (*non sentientis latera umerosque sopi[ti]onibus pinxit,* 22.1).[25] In other words, phallic figures are used by a woman on a man's body, symbolic of her sexual dominance over Ascyltos,[26] who is disempowered physically (*non sentientis*), if not sexually.

Related to female sexual aggression is that of the *cinaedus*, whose sexual behavior is normally associated in literature with the feminine, passive role:[27]

> ultimo cinaedus superuenit myrtea subornatus gausapa cinguloque succinctus. . . . modo extortis nos clunibus cecidit, modo basiis olidissimis inquinauit, donec Quartilla ballaenaceam tenens uirgam alteque succincta iussit infelicibus dari missionem. (21.2).
>
> Finally, a drag queen arrived, fitted out in brown wool and strapped with a girdle . . . now he fell upon us with his grinding buttocks, then besmeared us with his stinking kisses, until Quartilla, holding a whalebone staff and with her dress tucked high up, ordered a reprieve for the unlucky wretches.

The *cinaedus* displays the same behavior as the women, kissing the heroes aggressively.[28] A little later, a *cinaedus*' efforts to cure Encolpius from his impotence are described as both violent and fruitless (*immundissimo me basio conspuit. mox et super lectum uenit atque omni ui detexit recusantem. super inguina mea diu multumque frustra moluit*, 23.4–5 (he slobbered me with the filthiest kiss. Then he came to my bed and forced the covers off me, even as I resisted. He ground over my groin for a long time, and very much in vain). Although we have other satirical sources describing eunuchs or *cinaedi* as sexual aggressors,[29] we are here meant to understand their role along the lines of feminine sexual aggression enabled by the ritual framework of the mysteries. Such aggression is well-attested in other hostile descriptions of the mysteries, for instance, Livy's narrative of the Bacchanalia (see chapter 10:130–32). It is also analogous to the aggression displayed by the other female figures such as the *ancilla* or by Quartilla herself.

Once again, Quartilla's authority is primarily religious but extends over the social realm, since she dominates members of all social categories in the episode: the freeborn men Encolpius and Ascyltos, female slaves, *cinaedi*. Her authority is displayed in symbolic and ritual terms: the whalebone staff she carries (21.2) is yet another phallic weapon along the lines of the hairpin and the paintbrush mentioned earlier. But scholars have also posited that it could be a ritual instrument befitting Priapus (Schmeling 2011: 62).[30] Quartilla's priestly and social authority goes hand in hand with her sexual dominance over the other characters and the other sexually aggressive figures. The *cinaedi* are a case in point: *ab hac uoce equum cinaedus mutauit transituque ad comitem meum facto clunibus eum basiisque distriuit*, 24.4 (at the sound of her voice the drag queen changed his mount, went over to my friend [i.e., Ascyltos], and bruised him with his buttocks and kisses). Moreover, if, as scholars have argued, the *cinaedus* is a stand-in for Priapus,[31] then Quartilla's dominance over him attests to her absolute power within the rite, even over the representative of the god.

Petronius' account presents the *cinaedi* not only as sexually aggressive but also as completely feminized. This contradiction, which they share with the women in this episode, is intensified after the banquet by the arrival of a *cinaedus*, who, as we have seen, sexually attacks Encolpius. The *cinaedus* utters verses in sotadean meter (used for obscenities), which suggest that he could be a eunuch or at least that he shares similarities with them (23.2–3). He addresses other *cinaedi* as *molles*, an adjective also used to describe Cybele's castrated priests.[32] In addition, the concluding phrase of his verses, *Deliaci*

manu recisi, has been interpreted as referring to castration (Schmeling 2011: 70). Interestingly, the entrance of this *cinaedus* is preceded by the arrival of a female cymbal player, who has awakened the sleeping banqueters with her noisy instruments (*cum intrans cymbalistria et concrepans aera omnes excitauit*, 22.6). The sound of cymbals, common to both the cult of Cybele and Dionysus, is not out of place in this context, since, as mentioned earlier, Priapus' rites resemble those of Bacchus in that the initiands engage in sexual acts that feminize men. Similarly, Cybele's rites involve the self-castration of males, who subsequently become her priests forever.[33]

Quartilla controls language as well. Encolpius has lost all freedom to determine even the meaning of words, which goes hand in hand with his inability to control what happens to him. Slater (1990: 45) points out an example of Encolpius' complete lack of power in the wordplay concerning *embasicoetas* (23.2–24.4). Exhausted by the *cinaedus'* sexual assaults, Encolpius asks for an *embasicoetas*, a drinking cup. Quartilla, however, responds by giving him yet another *cinaedus*, who assaults him. Quartilla explains that *embasicoetas* is another name for *cinaedus*.[34] As readers laugh at Encolpius' blunder, they cannot help but feel Quartilla's complete triumph over him. The reader's own alignment with Quartilla, laughing at Encolpius rather than sympathizing with him, also enhances the impression of his utter victimization.

Encolpius' language displays his acknowledgment of Quartilla's status as chief priestess, as is evident in his use of the expression *quaeso . . . domina* (24.1): the archaic form *quaeso* evokes ritual language (Schmeling 2011: 71; Hofmann 1978: 128), while the term *domina* betrays Encolpius' acceptance of the hierarchies dictated by their roles in the mysteries: priestess and initiand respectively. Likewise, language extends Quartilla's powerful status from the realm of ritual to other sociopolitical levels. The expression *dari . . . missionem* (21.2) is a case in point. It is used in manumitting slaves, discharging soldiers or gladiators, and even in allowing losers in the amphitheater to survive to fight another day (Schmeling 2011: 62–63). As a result, Quartilla's language is commensurate with that of those who are in a position of social, military, or political power, and as such she invites identification with other authority figures within the novel and beyond it, such as Trimalchio (who appears later) or Nero. Petronius uses the ritual framework to suggest that any cultural space within which the women may exert power over the men can spill over to the domains of social and political life.

The Wedding

Mystery rituals usually conclude with a *hieros gamos* between the initiate and the god, followed by a ritual all-nighter known as the *peruigilium*. This detail is also attested in this episode, in the mock wedding of Pannychis and Giton. *Pannychis* is the Greek word for *peruigilium*. The bride is thus appropriately named as a representative of the divine. Although the girl's incredibly young age (given as seven in 25.2) seems to indicate that the wedding will restore the sexual asymmetry at work in the episode, I propose that the opposite is the case. Quartilla's dominance takes over the *hieros gamos* and completes the earlier feminization of Giton.[35] Quartilla inserts herself into the role of Pannychis, casting her as her alter ego.[36]

Quartilla rebuffs Encolpius' protests that the girl is too young to be married by reminiscing over her own lost virginity:

> "ita" inquit Quartilla "minor est ista quam ego fui, cum primum uirum passa sum? Iunonem meam iratam habeam, si umquam me meminerim uirginem fuisse. Nam et infans cum paribus inquinata sum, et subinde procedentibus annis maioribus me pueris applicui, donec ad [hanc] aetatem perueni." (25.4–5)
>
> Quartilla said, "So is she any younger than I was when I had my first man? May Juno be furious at me if I could remember that I was ever a virgin! For even when I was little girl, I played dirty with my buddies, and soon after I applied myself to older boys until I came of age."

Quartilla continues to employ phrases borrowed from the vocabulary of men: the expression *Iunonem meam* is analogous to a man swearing by his *genius*, that is "an individual guardian spirit originally symbolizing his generative powers" (Schmeling 2011: 77). As she describes her sexual education, she echoes her earlier acts of sexual aggressiveness toward the other men. We may compare the use of *applicui* in 25.5 and earlier in 24.6, where, as we have seen, Quartilla stole a kiss from Giton (also noted by Schmeling 2011: 72). Quartilla thus identifies herself with the young Pannychis, arguing that women attain empowerment through their religious agency, which in this case is also commensurate with sexual agency. As a result, Quartilla implies that the dominant partner in this alliance is Pannychis and not Giton. We are not dealing with a simple parody of a *hieros gamos* but with a perpetuation of the reversal of power dynamic that has been operative all along in

the Quartilla episode. The male is sexually disempowered, symbolically castrated, and denied his sexual identity, while the female is rendered all-powerful.

The parody of the wedding ritual underscores its perverted nature. The triple anaphora of *iam* points to Catullus' famous epithalamium (62.3–4). Psyche and Quartilla assume the role of the *pronubae*, with Psyche wrapping the *flammeum* around the girl's head. The *embasicoetas*—the *cinaedus*—stands in for the three paternal and maternal boys who lead the bride to her new home and carry the *fax*, while the drunken women (*ebriae mulieres*) take the place of the *matronae uniuirae* who are also part of the wedding procession. The *uestis*, or coverlet (perhaps an intertextual nod to the coverlet of Catullus 64), is *incesta* (Schmeling 2011: 78–79). The *libido iocantium* probably refers to the *fescennina iocatio*, the obscene jokes that were an integral part of the wedding procession (see chapter 1:19, chapter 2:29–30).

Even as this parody of a wedding involves all the necessary ritual elements, the roles of bride and groom are pointedly reversed. Giton, instead of leading his bride to bed, is being led to it by a sexually aroused Quartilla. Quartilla's role here furthers her identification with Pannychis. Giton's lack of resistance may seem to indicate his well-attested eagerness to perform his appointed sexual role, but in reality, his manliness is negated by Quartilla's sexual aggression, which puts him on the same level as the impotent Encolpius and the often sleeping Ascyltos. The girl, on the other hand, exhibits none of the traditional fear that brides display on their wedding day (*ac ne puella quidem tristis expauerat nuptiarum nomen*, 26.3 [and the poor girl was not even frightened by the idea of marital sex]). This reaction belies both her youth and her virginity and points us once again to her representation as Quartilla's alter ego. The *hieros gamos* thus perpetuates the asymmetry in the sexual roles and indicates the destruction of the integrity of the male self in the face of absolute female power.

In teasing out the implications of this analysis, one may contemplate the similarities between this wedding and two wedding ceremonies carried out by Nero with Pythagoras (Tacit. *Ann*. 15.37) and Doryphorus (Suet. *Nero* 29). In both cases, the emperor assumed the role of the bride.[37] Tacitus describes Nero's wedding to Pythagoras:

> ipse per licita atque inlicita foedatus nihil flagitii reliquerat quo corruptior ageret, nisi paucos post dies uni ex illo contaminatorum grege (nomen Pythagorae fuit) in modum sollemnium coniugiorum denupsisset. inditum

> imperatori flammeum, missi auspices, dos et genialis torus et faces nuptiales, cuncta denique spectata quae etiam in femina nox operit. (Tac. *Ann*. 15.37)
>
> He himself [i.e., Nero] was defiled by everything permitted or forbidden and there was no disgrace left that could render him more depraved, except that, after a few days, he married one from that posse of perverts (his name was Pythagoras) in a solemn wedding ceremony. The emperor was dressed in a yellow veil, seers were sent for, there was dowry and a marriage bed and wedding torches, and, finally, everything was in plain sight which the night covers up, even in the case of a female bride.

Suetonius relates the marriage with Doryphorus:

> conficeretur a Doryphoro liberto; cui etiam, sicut ipsi Sporus, ita ipse denupsit, uoces quoque et heiulatus uim patientium uirginum imitatus. (Suet. *Nero* 29)
>
> He [i.e., Nero] was worn out by his freedman Doryphorus; so he was even married to him, just as Sporus was to him, and he even imitated the screams and moans of a virgin being violently deflowered.

Walsh (1970: 91) observes the similarity between the wedding of Nero and Pythagoras and the episode of the *Satyrica* under discussion. The description of all ceremonial paraphernalia (veil, witnesses, torches) in both cases is notable. As Walsh notes, even the voyeurs are present (*cuncta denique spectata quae etiam in femina nox operit*). Allen (1962: 104–07) posits that Nero's wedding to Pythagoras is part of an initiation into the Mithraic mysteries, which excluded women.[38] Vout (2002: 498–99) places Sporus' feminization within the topsy-turvy context of the Saturnalia and interprets his castration as replicating that of Cybele's priests. Whatever the case may have been, the reversed power differential in these ceremonies and Nero's frequent use of them seem to reflect his delight in manipulating sexual norms as a means of displaying power—at least as far as our sources are concerned. In all these instances, whether they were actual weddings or initiatic weddings within a Mithraic or other religious context, the power relations and hierarchies prescribed by wedding custom are completely reversed.[39] While in Petronius feminization is devastating for the male character, Nero's gleeful requisition of the role of the bride is not. As a result, power is not simply linked to masculinity but is contingent on social and political hierarchies.

The wedding of Pannychis to Giton reverses the hierarchy of marriage by associating Pannychis first with the god (through her name, which stands

for the ritual as a whole) and by casting her as Quartilla's alter ego, a powerful character in her own right and a representative of Priapus. As a result, ostensible power relations are slippery and deceptive. The masculinity of both Giton and Encolpius is compromised in a manner very similar to the cases of Pythagoras and Doryphorus. Female power, aggressive and overbearing, is devastating for masculinity and the integrity of the male self. Nero's attacks on the notion of masculinity create analogies and differences that are especially telling. Femininity can now be linked to power, sexual or otherwise. Petronius' male heroes inhabit a world where a negotiation of gender roles and hierarchies is constantly necessary, but their lack of power is constant.

Voyeurism

Quartilla's ensuing voyeurism continues the perversion of wedding ritual in the service of the gender power reversal at work in the episode. After Pannychis and Giton have retired to the bedroom to consummate their wedding, Quartilla invites Encolpius to look in on the action through a peeping hole:

> itaque cum inclusi iacerent, consedimus *ante limen thalami*, et *in primis Quartilla* per rimam improbe diductam applicuerat oculum curiosum lusumque puerilem *libidinosa speculabatur diligentia*. me quoque ad idem spectaculum lenta manu traxit, et quia considerantium <co>haeserant uultus, quicquid a spectaculo uacabat, commouebat obiter labra et me tamquam furtiuis subinde osculis *uerberabat*. (26.4–5)

> Once they lay alone in bed, we sat on the *threshold of the bridal chamber*, and *Quartilla was the first* to apply a probing eye to a shameless crack in the door and *spy* on their childish play *with lecherous eagerness*. With a gentle pull she dragged me over also to take a look, and since we were cheek to cheek while we were looking, whenever she took a break from the peeping, she would incidentally all the while turn her lips and *whip* me now and again with purportedly stolen kisses.

Voyeurism fits well within the power dynamic that we have so far outlined. Work on feminism and psychoanalysis analyzes the gendered dynamics of voyeurism and provides a framework for interpreting it as a manifestation of gender roles and power relations.[40] Accordingly, the gaze is gendered as male and dominant, rendering the object of the gaze passive and dominated.

The application of this theoretical model to Roman elegy has illuminated the dynamics of gender roles therein.[41]

Along the same lines, the work of film critic E. Ann Kaplan offers an analysis of the female spectator that is useful in the present examination of Quartilla's voyeurism. Kaplan argues that a female spectator by no means indicates the existence of a feminine gaze. Rather, when women are in the dominant position of the spectator, they enter the space of male dominance. In other words, they "take on the 'masculine' role as bearer of the gaze and driver of the action" (1983: 29). Kaplan submits that in doing so, the woman loses her feminine identity: "She nearly always loses her traditionally feminine characteristics . . . not those of attractiveness, but rather of kindness, humaneness, motherliness. She is now often cold, driving, ambitious, manipulating, just like the men whose position she has usurped" (1983: 29). As a result of the woman's assumption of the masculine role of the bearer of the gaze, the man necessarily steps into the position of the feminine, "thus keeping the whole structure intact" (1983: 29).

In this light, Quartilla, by taking on the male role of the spectator, once again negates the power of the male gaze, even as she invites Encolpius to participate in the act of voyeurism.[42] She is described as having herself placed the hole in the wall (*per rimam improbe diductam*), eagerly watching the spectacle and deriving sexual pleasure from it (*applicuerat oculum curiosum lusumque puerilem libidinosa speculabatur diligentia*). When she invites Encolpius, she is clearly the dominant party, since her action contains a hint of violence (*traxit*). She continues in the same vein of female sexual aggression against the male familiar from the preceding narrative (*et me tamquam furtiuis subinde osculis uerberabat*), whereby the narrator describes her kissing as whipping and torture, a kind of sadistic violent act. As Mulvey has convincingly argued, voyeurism is often linked to sadism. Encolpius describes Quartilla's sexual gestures toward him as punishment. Forced to participate and unable to resist, he is completely at the mercy of her will.[43] As a result, Quartilla usurps the male role of sadistic spectator and Encolpius is once again feminized, even as he is part of the voyeuristic experience.

Furthermore, the gender role reversals are emphasized through the scene's perversion of wedding ritual. After the wedding feast, the bride and groom retired to the bedroom (*thalamus*). The attendants stood outside, singing the wedding song (epithalamium). The singing and dancing outside the *thalamus* are also understood as symbolically covering the bride's cries as she loses her virginity.[44] Quartilla and Encolpius occupy the position of the

wedding attendants sitting at the threshold of the wedding chamber (*consedimus ante limen thalami*; Schmeling 2011: 79). Narratives of choral activity often emphasize the movements of the chorus leader, standing first among the group.[45] Here too Quartilla occupies a prominent space (*in primis*), but instead of leading the singing and dancing, she is leading Encolpius to a peep show. While normally the guests would celebrate the happy union with song and dancing, granting privacy to the couple, Quartilla uses voyeurism in order to achieve sexual pleasure herself (*lusumque puerilem libidinosa speculabatur diligentia*), and invites Encolpius to do the same, thus violating the boundaries that wedding ritual so assiduously protects. Quartilla's sexual arousal by means of this *spectaculum* is further evident in the kisses she gives Encolpius. Encolpius' inability to be aroused is not surprising, since his masculinity is once again negated: as the first-person narrator, he expresses his submission to Quartilla's sadistic sexual advances using the vocabulary of torture (*uerberabat*). As a result, the context of the wedding ritual so blatantly perverted facilitates the reversal of all gender norms and hierarchies.

In this episode, the ritual framework is instrumental in conferring authority upon the female characters. Quartilla and her minions appear to derive their agency directly from the god and are not embedded in other social structures. In this context, we see a permanent reversal of gender norms, whereby the feminine and feminized figures exercise authority. Cast as a ritual agent of the phallic god, Quartilla is capable of repeatedly causing sexual penetration of the men during the *peruigilium*. In the context of Priapus' mysteries, ritual agency facilitates sexual agency in even the most unlikely Priapic figures: male and female slaves, *cinaedi*, a young virgin. Moreover, the power differential between the sexes is never restored, despite the ritual enactment of a wedding. The continuing impotence of Encolpius at the end of the episode makes it obvious that wedding ritual can no longer effect any return to norms.[46] By contrast, the other male figures, Ascyltos and Giton, are feminized, robbed of their capacity to operate as sexual agents and by extension of a gender performance constitutive of male identity.

Subsequent episodes in the *Satyrica* confirm the link between female power and performance of (magic) ritual, as the episode with Circe, Proeselenus, and Oenothea makes plain. Those women also act against normative female bonds and relationships and their authority is grounded in their religious role, outside social or familial structures. While Encolpius and Ascyltos both eventually regain their sexual agency, the ritual framework of

Quartilla's mysteries poignantly shows that masculinity is fragile, precarious, and subject to religious, political, or other hierarchies.

In this part of the book, I have examined how wedding ritual and the institution of marriage more generally serve as a framework within which female agency can be expressed. Women's performative roles within these contexts reveal various levels of empowerment and form part of a larger concern of this body of literature regarding the individual who operates within while being pulled by social, political, familial, religious, or other structures. In Catullus' epithalamia, the role of women, and of the bride in particular, delineates the social values that marriage promotes and safeguards but also illustrates the plurality of meanings that wedding ritual can generate vis-à-vis marital and social relations. In Ovid, the intersection of the cult of Isis with Roman wedding ritual suggests that gender categories and familial hierarchies may be subject to debate. In Lucan, wedding rites are not just pressed to their limits but are presented as their inversion, with Marcia and Cato performing an antiwedding mirroring the conflict and distortion of civil war. In Seneca's *Troades*, Polyxena's sacrifice, as marriage to death, showcases the futility of resistance to a barbaric authority but also glorifies the defiant spirit of the victim. What is more, Polyxena's negotiated consent to her plight is subversive and points to the need for social change. In Petronius, the figures of authority are women, sexually controlling the male protagonists and completely reversing gender hierarchies. The framework of the Priapic mysteries provides a space for a performance of femininity that differs radically from that in other social contexts.

The rich variety of women's roles in weddings showcase the various degrees of female agency and empowerment while providing Roman authors with new avenues for sharing their insights into the ideological workings of the transitional and turbulent times in which they live.

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PART II

MOURNERS

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Roman Burial Rites

Our evidence for Roman death rites is abundant. It includes cemeteries, sarcophagi, inscribed tombstones, funerary art, mausoleums, grave goods, human remains, and a plethora of literary and historiographical sources. Nonetheless, a comprehensive book-length study on the subject is still lacking.[1]

Theoretical work on death rites in cultural anthropology and sociology has shown a deep connection between mortuary practices and social structures, a connection that defines social, familial, and individual identities as well as concepts about death and the afterlife. These approaches have done much to illuminate our understanding of Roman beliefs and customs.[2]

For the purposes of this study, it is important to note that Roman women discharged many essential duties when a family member died. They were responsible for washing and cleaning the dead body and for preparing it for the funeral and burial (*collocatio*). They actively participated in the funeral procession, the burial itself, and the rites occurring afterward. Women were also largely responsible for performing the many ceremonies surrounding the ancestor cult that was an integral part of Roman private religion.

In Greco-Roman thought, the death of a loved one blurs the boundaries between the living and the dead. The bereaved feel that life is no longer worth living, that they cannot take pleasure in any of their normal activities, and that their survival is sadder than death itself. This intense connection between the living and the dead is manifest in the Roman custom in which a spouse or a close relative was present at the moment of death to catch the last breath with a kiss.[3] Roman women participated in a series of mortuary rites and customs that carefully ensured the eventual separation of the world of the dead from that of the living. Although the family of the deceased was imagined as temporarily entering the realm of death, rites also ensured that, after the burial, they would be progressively and firmly restored among the

living (Scheid 1984: 119–20). For instance, a branch from a cypress tree was planted in front of the house to announce to the world outside that the household was in mourning and that anyone entering it would risk incurring pollution. Similarly, music recognizable as funerary would indicate to those outside that there was a death in the house. The family of the deceased, the *lugentes* (mourners), would be dressed in the *toga atra* or *sordida* (the dark or dirty toga), thus contrasting with the well-dressed, washed, and perfumed body of the deceased. In this way, Romans marked the destructibility of human nature, which the living share with the dead. On the other hand, the beautification of the dead body suggested that humanity is indestructible, able to transcend death. Moreover, the state of the body set it apart from the squalid mourners, preparing the ground for the eventual permanent separation of the living from the dead (Scheid 1984: 120–21).

During the funeral, men covered their head with a veil, which rendered their appearance markedly different from daily practice, while women, with their hair unbound and wearing dirty clothing, beat their breasts in lamentation at the accompaniment of a flute (a good illustration can be seen in the Tomb of the Haterii marble relief: *Lying in State*, ca. 80–90 CE, Museo Gregoriano Profano ex Lateranense).[4] The women's dress, different from that of men, separates them visually from the crowd as well. Both at the moment of death and at the funeral, the ritual of *conclamatio* took place, that is, the calling of the name of the deceased three times (Treggiari 1991: 485). The mourning of the dead was actually observed for seven days, with the women of the family singing lamentations, the *neniae*.[5] Affluent Romans hired professional mourners, the *praeficae*, who led the funeral procession accompanied by pipe music.[6]

Men did not participate in this type of lamentation but displayed their grief in a much more reserved fashion. Their share of mourning fell within the realm of reasoned discourse, the praise of the dead, known as *laudatio funebris*. During this praise, the male members of the family placed the deceased within the greater line of family ancestors, often giving the genealogy of the entire *gens*. In the case of particularly important individuals, the *laudatio* was delivered in the forum and was followed by a procession of the family's *imagines* (Dutsch 2008: 264, Flower 1996: 115–18). Dutsch (2008: 264–65) argues that this practice represented a final exchange between the individual and society, whereby the commemoration of the deceased aristocrat's contributions constituted a beneficial example for the greater community. Most sources agree that the *neniae* (funeral dirges) took place after the

laudatio, when the procession continued with the *praeficae* as leaders, along with musicians and actors representing the deceased and the ancestors.[7]

At the site of the grave, a sow is sacrificed to Ceres; its blood is offered to the dead, its entrails to the goddess; and the family shares a meal (the *silicernium*; see also Scheid 1984: 129–32, Maurin 1984: 205). After the funeral, the family continues to visit the tomb (Treggiari 1991: 491). When the period of nine days of mourning ends, the family shares another meal with a larger group of friends, the *cena nouendialis*, which signals the reintegration of the family of the deceased among the living.

My study is particularly interested in female lamentation and the space it offers for the expression of a feminine poetics. Unlike reality, literature usually describes women as unable to give up their lamentation and return to normal life, while men emerge as more successful in that regard.[8] The public nature of burials and the women's prominent role therein bring the roles of men and women in mourning into sharp contrast. According to philosophers, surrendering to grief is characteristic of the less rational types of human beings: slaves, barbarians, and women.[9] The pleasure arising from lamentation is well-attested in Greek and Latin literature: the act of mourning prolongs the connection between the mourner and the mourned, while it keeps the memory of the lost one alive and immortalizes the past in the present (Loraux 1998: 100). Nevertheless, finding pleasure in lamentation can be dangerous, because it undermines the reintegration of the mourner in the world of the living. Also, especially in the wake of violence, it may feed feelings of rage and desire for revenge that may prevent burial rites from achieving unity and reconciliation in the community.[10]

As a space for specifically female expression, mourning is thus associated in literature with the emotions and the irrational, thereby diminishing or dismissing its value as social and cultural discourse. And yet the act of lamentation, even filtered through male authors, may still contain traces of its cultural power in its ability to reorganize the relation of women within male-dominated institutions. The ethnographic work of Seremetakis (1991) on a modern traditional community, that of Mani in Greece, has shown that mourning renders women's bodies visible, female pain audible, and their actions within the context of death ritual politically and culturally transformative. This transformational power lies in the antiphonal structure of mourning practice, which reproduces tensions and oppositions between men and women, official religion and popular belief, and clan and external institutions (159–76, 227–31). In the course of her study, Seremetakis draws

parallels with archaic Greece.[11] Although our lack of evidence for Roman culture does not permit definitive conclusions, I would nevertheless argue that close attention to descriptions of mourning in Roman texts may lead us to a similar hypothesis regarding the potential of lamentation to challenge social norms.[12]

In the chapters that follow, I analyze how Roman authors articulate gendered behaviors in mourning: the women's excessive grief gives full expression to the gravity of the loss suffered by the household, while the men's more "rational" response reflects their orientation toward the future. In this way, authors use gender as a means of exploring tensions between individual households and the Roman state as a whole. I begin with a discussion of Orpheus' death at the hands of the Ciconian women, which I interpret as the result of male incursion into the female territory of lamentation and performance of burial rites, thus suggesting that poetry and lamentation should be regarded as on an equal footing (chapter 7). Then I proceed to examine the central role played by burial and mourning in Statius' *Thebaid*, arguing that women in their capacity as mourners emerge as the only ones capable of providing an end to civil war (chapter 8).

Mourning Orpheus

Poetry and Lament in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 10 and 11

In this chapter I argue that weddings, funerals, and Bacchic rites form the backbone of the story of Orpheus' second loss of Eurydice and underscore the main theme of the story, which is the potential and limitations of poetry as a means of empowering humans. Scholars have long read the narrative of Orpheus in book 10 of the *Metamorphoses* as a meditation on the power of poetry (Knox 1986: 48–64; Segal 1989: 54–72, 81–94; Johnson 2008: 96–116). Orpheus' account has also been interpreted as encapsulating the entire *Metamorphoses* (Pavlock 2009: 106–09).

By comparison, little attention has been paid to the scene of Orpheus' death at the hands of the Ciconian women in book 11, except to note its grotesque and humorous elements (Makowski 1996). A closer examination, however, reveals that religious and ritual elements bookend the Orpheus narrative, signaling the importance of probing the ritual framework within which the entire story unfolds.

In what follows, I examine the ritual underpinnings of the two episodes. I begin with Orpheus' wedding, which is fraught with ritual distortion (10.1–10); then I analyze his lament and the construction of his identity as a mourner (10.11–85); lastly, I focus on the women's Bacchic rites, which cause Orpheus' death (11.1–84). I argue that the episode's ritual context casts women as a counterpart to Orpheus as a model poet, therefore placing the issue of gender at the heart of the discussion on poetry. By offering female ritual activity as a formidable alternative to Orpheus' poetic voice, the episode presents an image of poetry as a struggle for power between male and female. Wedding and Bacchic rituals intersect, bringing into sharp relief the problem of gendered performance of poetic genres. A careful examination of the episode's ritual elements (wedding, maenadism, lamentation) displays their close link to Orpheus' progressive engagement with different poetic genres (epic, elegy, lamentation). Moreover, this intersection of ritual and

poetic performance emerges as inextricably connected with issues of gender and power, a recurring concern in the Ovidian corpus.

The Wedding Rite

Ovid's description of Orpheus' and Eurydice's wedding in the opening of *Metamorphoses* 10 contains a reversal of several key elements of wedding narratives in order to foreshadow the sad outcome of their union.[1] The poet highlights key elements from Roman wedding ceremony to convey the deeply problematic nature of Orpheus' and Eurydice's wedding:

> inde per immensum croceo uelatus amictu
> aethera digreditur Ciconumque Hymenaeus ad oras
> tendit et Orphea nequiquam uoce uocatur.
> adfuit ille quidem, sed nec sollemnia uerba
> nec laetos uultus nec felix attulit omen;
> fax quoque quam tenuit lacrimoso stridula fumo
> usque fuit nullosque inuenit motibus ignes.
> exitus auspicio grauior; nam nupta per herbas
> dum noua Naiadum turba comitata uagatur,
> occidit in talum serpentis dente recepto. (*Met*. 10.1–10)

> From there through the vast air Hymen, dressed in a saffron cloak, departed and made for the shores of the Ciconians and was summoned by the voice of Orpheus but in vain. He was indeed there, but he brought neither the sacred words nor a joyous face nor an auspicious omen; and the torch which he held sputtered smoke that brought tears to the eyes, nor would it catch fire with any brandishing. The outcome was worse than the beginning; for while she was walking through the grass accompanied by a band of Naiads, the new bride died, bitten on the ankle by a serpent's tooth.

The book's opening passage evokes the genre of the wedding song. As it is customary in epithalamia, the groom summons the god of marriage, Hymenaeus,[2] and does so in ritual terms (*uoce uocatur*, 3, is a ritual formula), but in this case, he does so in vain (*nequiquam*, 3). Hymenaeus is described as wearing his ceremonial attire (*croceo uelatus amictu*, 1), whose colors also recall the bride's veil, the *flammeum*. Yet other important elements are absent: the reference to "solemn words" (*sollemnia uerba*, 4) reminds the readers of the formulaic phrases that were pronounced during the wedding. The "joyful faces" (*laetos uultus*, 5) point not only to the love shared by the couple and

their parents' joy at this union but also to the bride and groom's legally binding consent to remain united in marriage. The customary auspicious omens (*felix . . . omen*, 5) are similarly absent. The wedding torch (*fax*), instead of lighting the happy couple, fills the guests' eyes with smoke and goes out (6–7). The guests' eyes are now filled with tears, foreshadowing the ritual context of the funeral, where torches, as we have seen, also play an important role. According to the narrator, the inauspicious beginning of this wedding explicitly foreshadows its tragic outcome (8), while the scene of Eurydice's death also reads as a tragic reversal of the wedding procession. The new bride (*nupta . . . noua*, 8–9) is accompanied by a band of Naiads (water nymphs) as she strolls through the grass, perhaps an allusion to the wedding procession. The phrase "new bride" can point both to Eurydice as a recently married woman and to her status before she has made the ceremonial procession to her husband's house.

This distorted rite contrasts particularly sharply with the correctness of the wedding ceremony that just closed the previous book, that of Iphis and Ianthe (9.666–797). As we saw in chapter 3, in the Iphis story, the gods were able to help the couple overcome insurmountable obstacles (namely that they were both women), and the wedding takes place following proper ritual procedure, with the marriage deities all present (Venus, Juno, and Hymenaeus) and the appropriate gender roles restored: Iphis is now a boy and thus able to fulfill his marital role (*potitur*, 9.797).[3] As scholars have noted, the juxtaposition of the stories of Orpheus and Iphis confirms the notion that love, like art, is possible only through miracles or in another world (Segal 1989: 67–70) and by extension intimates the disempowerment and hopelessness of the human race.

I would like to suggest that the juxtaposition of Orpheus' distorted wedding ceremony with Iphis' correct one is occasioned by another important issue at stake in both stories, namely appropriate gender roles and appropriate modes of expression of these roles for each sex. After his wife's death, Orpheus assumes a host of new and arguably feminine roles: a new ritual role as a mourner and a new sexual orientation as a lover of men (see also Makowski 1996: 27–28).

Misappropriation or distortion of wedding motifs is also found in the segment describing Orpheus' rejection of women. In many extant epithalamia, the narrator points to the desire that the extraordinary beauty of the bride or groom arouses in the other young men or women of the community (or sometimes in both men and women).[4] Here the same motif expresses the effects

of the poet's new sexual preference on the women (*multas tamen ardor habebat / iungere se uati; multae doluere repulsae*, 81–82 [many (sc. women) felt a passion for the bard; many grieved, having been repulsed]).[5] Ovid here uses vocabulary and motifs typical of wedding songs so as to connect this epithalamium with its opposite poetic form, the dirge. Just as Ovid previously distorted the context of the wedding ritual, so in this instance he distorts the content of the epithalamium by using elements from lamentation in order to create a feeling of uneasiness and foreboding. At the same time, this blurring of genres—wedding song and dirge—brings into sharper focus the blurring of sexual roles, as Orpheus is poised to assume the feminine role of mourner. Orpheus' new sexual orientation mirrors a change in his poetic role, from (male) poet to (female) mourner. Before we discuss the link between gender and poetry, it is important to outline the way Ovid's text represents lament as commensurate with the genres of epic and elegy.

Funeral and Lamentation

As Orpheus' wedding turns to a funeral, the framework of mourning is introduced, with his song assuming the form of a lament:

> quam satis ad superas postquam Rhodopeius auras
>
> defleuit uates, ne non temptaret et umbras,
> ad Styga Taenaria est ausus descendere porta. (*Met*. 10.11–13)
>
> After the poet of Rhodope had mourned her enough in the upper world, he dared to go down to the Stygian world through the gate of Taenarus, so that he might also try the shades.

The juxtaposition of the words *defleuit* and *uates* with enjambment and a pause emphasizes the connection between Orpheus' identity as a poet and the new subject matter of his poetry, lamentation.[6] The narrator casts the bard's decision to try the gods of the underworld as an extension of his lament for his lost wife (*ne non temptaret et umbras*, 12). This episode mobilizes a powerful intertextual framework—that of Orpheus' second loss of Eurydice in Vergil's fourth *Georgic* (453–527), *Odyssey* 19 (518–23), and Catullus 65 (12–15). Ovid reworks and expands on the main themes emerging in these intertexts: the explicit connection between Orpheus' lament and the feminine task of mourning; the casting of lamentation as an extension of the genre of elegy; and finally, the emphasis on lamentation as endless and uncontrollable.

Philomela's lament for her dead son, Itys, serves as a common thread in all three intertexts, firmly casting the act of lamentation as belonging to the purview of women: in *Geo.* 4.511–15, the narrative links Philomela's weeping with Orpheus' lament for Eurydice; in *Odyssey* 19.518–23, Penelope compares herself to the daughter of Pandion,[7] whose lament for her son Itylus is identified with the song of the nightingale; in *Odyssey* 16.216–18, Odysseus' and Telemachus' lamentations are analogous to the cry of birds whose young have been taken away by farmers (Thomas 1988: 233); and in Catullus 65.12–15, the narrator compares his poems on the loss of his brother to Procne's mourning the loss of her son.

In addition, the perpetuity of mourning is a motif shared by all three intertexts. In Vergil, just as the nightingale renews her mourning (*integrat*, *Geo.* 4.515), so Orpheus' lament is presented as never-ending.[8] Homer uses the simile to describe Penelope's permanent grief for her own status as a husbandless bride.[9] Similarly, Catullus' mourning of his brother is endless (*semper maesta tua carmina morte canam*, 65.12 [I will always sing sorrowful poems about your death]). Yet although the bird simile highlights Odysseus' and Telemachus' grief for their long separation,[10] in the main narrative their mourning comes to an end in light of masculine duties urgently requiring their attention, namely the killing of the suitors and the restoration of Odysseus' authority over his household.[11] This makes for an important difference that I believe Ovid in his own narrative exploits even further. While male mourners find a way to move on to the future, the women, unable to overcome their loss, perpetuate it through song. But unlike the Homeric figures, Vergil's Orpheus and Catullus align themselves with the women's perpetual state of mourning.

Moreover, Vergil's text explores the boundaries between epic and elegy, which is also an important aspect of Ovid's epic. Philomela's song is a *miserabile carmen*[12] and thus refers explicitly to poetry (with the use of *carmen*) and specifically to elegiac poetry (with the use of *miserabile*). Vergil here points to elegy's purportedly original function as lament.[13] The same play on elegy's ancient etymology can be found in Catullus, where the poet asserts unremitting lamentation for his brother's death (*maesta carmina . . . canam*, 65.12). By mobilizing these intertexts, Ovid expands even more boldly on these themes to include gender reversal within the framework of mourning ritual.

Orpheus' descent to the underworld dramatizes what most laments usually express: the mourner's desire to be reunited with their loved one, be it in the upper world or the one below:[14]

haec quoque, cum iustos matura peregerit annos,
iuris erit uestri; pro munere poscimus usum.[15]
quod si fata negant ueniam pro coniuge, certum est
nolle redire mihi; leto gaudete duorum. (*Met*. 10.36–39)

She also shall be yours, when in ripe old age she will have lived out her rightful years. I ask the right to have her as a gift; but if the fates deny this favor for my wife, it is certain that I do not wish to return; rejoice in the death of two.

Orpheus, the poet-mourner, persuades the gods of the underworld with his song and thus succeeds in achieving what remains a permanently frustrated desire in laments: the return of his beloved from the world of the dead.[16] The content of his song, however, is not a lament: playing, as we have seen, on the popular definition of elegy as lamentation, it is actually a praise of love.[17] Orpheus begins his song with a *recusatio*, that is, a list of the feats he will not perform, rejecting traditional heroism, which is cast as specifically epic. For example, he states that he is not interested in exploring the dark Tartarus (*non huc ut opaca uiderem/ Tartara descendi*, 20–21 [I did not come down here to see dark Tartarus]), like other (epic) heroes, such as Odysseus and Aeneas, or to capture Cerberus, like heroes such as Hercules (*nec uti uillosa colubris/ terna Medusaei uincirem guttura monstri*, 21–22 [nor (did I come down here) so that I might shackle the three throats of Medusa's monstrous son, shaggy with snakes]).[18] The poet's *recusatio* thus privileges elegy over epic poetry. Orpheus reconfigures epic *katabasis* in order to champion his love (for instance, the word *amor* is repeated twice in the span of a few lines: *uicit Amor*, 26; *uos quoque iunxit Amor*, 29).[19] The elegiac *uates* is successful in obtaining his wish, even though he ultimately fails in his quest.

This early depiction of Orpheus' identity as both a *uates* and a mourner is reinforced in the narrative of Eurydice's second loss, but with a twist. Orpheus' poetic power now suffers a significant setback:

Non aliter stupuit gemina nece coniugis Orpheus
quam tria qui Stygii, medio portante catenas,
colla canis uidit; quem non pauor ante reliquit
quam natura prior, saxo per corpus oborto;
quique in se crimen traxit uoluitque uideri
Olenos esse nocens, tuque, o confisa figurae,
infelix Lethaea, tuae, iunctissima quondam
pectora, nunc *lapides*, quos umida sustinet Ide.

orantem frustraque iterum transire *uolentem*
portitor arcuerat. (*Met*. 10.64–73)

By his wife's second death Orpheus was *stunned,* like the man who saw Styx's three-headed dog chained by the middle of his neck[20] (terror did not leave him before his former nature left and stone crept over his body); or like Olenos, who took [Lethaea's] crime upon himself and wished to seem guilty; and like you, ill-starred Lethaea, over-confident in your beauty; your two hearts, once so close together, are now two *stones* which moist Ide holds. The ferryman kept him [sc. Orpheus] away, though he was *imploring and wishing in vain* to cross [the Styx] again.

Orpheus' stunned silence now mirrors the silence of the shades (often called *silentes*, cf. 30, 53) and signals the eventual powerlessness of his song. The passage emphasizes the poet's feeling of terror at the second loss of his wife in a way that is particularly telling in a funerary context. Likening Orpheus to a stone, first in the scene of the man petrified at the sight of Cerberus and then in the scene of the lovers who are transformed into statues, illustrates the quality of his terror; it also evokes the permanent silence of a stone, which is used to mark a tomb.[21] A further irony is at work here: funerary poetry in the form of tomb inscriptions transcends the silence of the dead body and of the tomb itself and succeeds in communicating with the living.[22] Orpheus thus symbolically turns into a tombstone, as his poetry from now on is only capable of lamentation.

Orpheus' embrace of the poetry of lamentation is specifically marked as akin to female duties in mourning. Like Roman women, Orpheus is shown to wear mourning garb and to lament for seven days, which, as we have seen, is the prescribed period of mourning (Maurin 1984: 194):

septem tamen ille diebus
squalidus in ripa *Cereris sine munere* sedit;
cura dolorque animi lacrimaeque alimenta fuere. (*Met*. 10.73–75)

Nevertheless for seven days he sat on the bank *in filthy rags* and *with no gift of food*. Care, heart's grief, and tears were his nourishment.

The narrator states that the act of lamentation takes the place of food. Orpheus' lack of nourishment differentiates his actions from the usual practice of sharing a meal at the funeral and nine days after the passing of the deceased. As a result, the poet not only adopts the feminine task of mourning

but also chooses to do so in perpetuity, without observing the rites that are eventually going to reunite the mourners with the world of the living and reinforce the boundaries between the living and the dead.[23] That different modes of mourning are appropriate for each sex is further manifested later in the same book, when both Apollo and Venus engage in lamentation, providing a contrast with that of Orpheus. So, for instance, Apollo, at the sight of the dead Hyacinthus, is described as turning pale (*expalluit*, 185). He thus momentarily shares the pallor of death with his beloved companion, as is customary in mourning narratives, but his lament (196–208) focuses on the ways in which the memory of the young man will endure:

> semper eris mecum memorique haerebis in ore.
> [te lyra pulsa manu, te carmina nostra sonabunt,
> flosque nouus scripto gemitus imitabere nostros.][24] (*Met*. 10.204–6)
>
> You will always be with me and you will cling to my mindful words, [my lyre when struck by my hand will echo your name, and my songs will sing of you, and as a new flower you will imitate my mourning with your inscription.]

Through the act of commemoration, Apollo, the god of poetry, transcends death. The use of *haereo*, "cling," a verb suggesting physical contact (OLD s.v 2, 4, 4b), is now put to work to express the continuation of their relationship in death through Apollo's song (see Hardie 2002: 292). While commemorating the dead is also a function of female lament, the mention of the lyre and writing (*scripto*) are both nods to male modes of poetry, thus differentiating Apollo's (male) song from ordinary (female) lamentation.

On the other hand, at the close of book 10, upon seeing the lifeless Adonis, Venus engages in utterly feminine ritual mourning behavior, tearing her garments and hair and beating her breasts with her hands (*pariterque sinum pariterque capillos/rupit et indignis percussit pectora palmis*, 722–23 [she tears her clothes and hair alike and resentfully she beats her breast with her hands]). Her lament declares that a yearly festival will reenact this death in order to provide a memorial of her lamentation, therefore exalting the act of mourning itself in perpetuity (*luctus monimenta manebunt/semper, Adoni, mei, repetitaque mortis imago/annua plangoris peraget simulamina nostri*, 725–27 [there will always be a monument of my mourning, Adonis, and the memory of your death each year will afford an imitation of my lament]).[25] Viewed in this light, Orpheus, the most powerful of poets, is presented as assuming a mode of female expression to achieve his greatest poetic feat.[26] His song comprises the

entire book. The first etiological story therein, that of Cyparissus, explaining the connection of cypress trees with the state of mourning, confirms that the song we are about to hear is a lament.[27] Cypress branches, as mentioned in chapter 5:86, were marks of mourning at Roman houses.

Bacchic Rites and the Death of Orpheus

In the next book, the tension surrounding Orpheus' role as poet and mourner is represented as a full-fledged rivalry between male and female modes of expression in the description of his death at the hands of the Ciconian women. In this episode, a poetic contest is set up. Orpheus' incredible poetic powers, which dominated wild animals, birds, snakes, and wild beasts, are now completely vanquished by the maenads:[28]

> ac primum *attonitas etiamnum uoce canentis*
> innumeras uolucres anguesque *agmenque ferarum*,
> maenades Orphei titulum rapuere triumphi.[29] (*Met*. 11.20–22)

> And first the maenads mangled Orpheus' triumphal train, the countless birds, snakes, and *the line of beasts still spellbound by the voice of the singer.*

The theme of the power contest is accentuated by the use of military language: Orpheus and his retinue form a procession, as it were, showcasing his irresistible poetic ability, which is analogous to both a force of nature and military might. As Murphy (1972: 44–45) rightly comments, the military imagery initially suggested by the description of the beasts as *agmen ferarum* is continued with the casting of the animals as part of a triumphal procession (*triumphi*, 22). Nevertheless, Orpheus' power is unable to withstand the onslaught of the Ciconian women, who kill the poet's audience, the proof of his amazing poetic talent:

> cunctaque tela forent cantu mollita, sed ingens
> clamor et infracto Berecyntia tibia cornu
> tympanaque et plausus et Bacchei ululatus
> obstrepuere sono citharae; tum denique saxa
> non exauditi rubuerunt sanguine uatis. (*Met*. 11.15–19)

> And all their missiles would have been softened by his song, but a huge clamor of the Berecyntian flute mixed with the curved horn,[30] drums, breast-beatings, and the shrieks of Bacchanals all drowned the sound of the lyre; then finally the rocks grew red with the blood of the poet, whose voice could no longer be heard.

The raucous noise of the women's song is emphasized as a blend of percussion (drums and breast-beating or applause),[31] horns, and various types of shouting. The unusual meter also seems to replicate the maenads' sound, with the use of hiatus (*Bacchei*) and the line's ending with the four-syllable *ululatus*.[32] Orpheus' earlier lament is also cast in the context of power relations: as Patricia Johnson (2008: 98) has recently argued, Orpheus' song to the deities of the underworld pivots around the unequal power relation between speaker and addressee. Orpheus' ability to define and identify his audience, paired with his poetic talent, has an unprecedented effect upon gods and men. But his miscalculations with regard to the Ciconian women's reaction to his song display the power of an audience, especially since that audience offers an alternative, more powerful, form of expression.

As we have seen in other instances, such as the case of Petronius' Quartilla, the women's power is generated and enabled by their ritual identity: they are portrayed as Bacchants in the midst of a rite (*nurus Ciconum tectae lymphata ferinis/pectora uelleribus*, 3–4 [the crazed women of the Cicones, covered with animal skins over their breasts]; and their hair is loose (*leues iactato crine per auras*, 6 [her tresses streaming in the gentle breeze]); they use their religious wands, the *thyrsi*, as weapons to attack the poet (*hastam . . . quae foliis praesuta*, 7–9 [a spear . . . covered with foliage]); *thyrsos non haec in munera factos*, 28 [Bacchic wands not made for this task]). The military imagery we saw earlier as describing Orpheus' power also describes the women's force: aside from the thyrsus/spear, a stone is called a missile (*alterius telum lapis est*, 10), and the attack is explicitly named a reckless war (*temeraria . . . bella*, 13–14). As with the wedding, ritual has gone awry once again, with the Bacchants using farmer's tools as weapons and performing ritual *sparagmos* (tearing apart of live animals) not on wild animals, as Bacchic narratives normally prescribe, but on domestic ones (*cornuque minaci/diuulsere boues*, 37–38 [they tore in pieces the oxen who threatened them with their horns]). The distortion of ritual is further emphasized by the maenads' attack on the farmers. Bacchic rituals are normally a type of fertility rite: women abandon their domestic space and unite with the wildness of nature; they return eventually to their homes and children and thus affirm the value of civilization even as they temporarily negate it. (On Bacchic ritual and women, see part 3.) When the Ciconian Bacchants turn against the farmers, they undermine the fundamental purpose of their ritual—to honor the god who bestows the benefits of civilization (through wine and general abundance of nature) upon all humans, young and old, male and female, rich and poor. As they turn

the farmers' tools into weapons of destruction, they also privilege senseless violence over civilizing progress.

Once again the power differential between the poet and the women is expressed in ritual terms, through Orpheus' final portrayal as a suppliant. Even though his power as a poet is repeatedly indicated, as we have seen, through the military imagery accompanying his song (11.8–9) and the repeated futile attacks of the maenads against him, in the end both Orpheus' voice and his physical self are destroyed by the Ciconian women:

> ad uatis fata recurrunt
> tendentemque manus atque illo tempore primum
> inrita dicentem nec quidquam uoce mouentem
> *sacrilegae* perimunt . . . (*Met*. 11.38–41)

> [The maenads] rush back to kill the poet; and the *sacrilegious* women strike him down though he is stretching his hands in supplication, and for the first time uttering words unavailing and moving no one with his voice . . .

Orpheus' suppliant status indicates his utter powerlessness as a poet, rendered explicit in the tragic failure of his song to avert his dismemberment (40). His failure as a poet is all the more poignant in view of his previous success over the intransigent powers of the underworld. The narrative calls out the sacrilege for what it is (*sacrilegae*, 41), and Bacchus avenges Orpheus by transforming the maenads into trees, deprived of any voice (77–84). Yet the Bacchants' success in inflicting a terrible punishment on Orpheus establishes their ritual song as triumphant over his.[33]

Female empowerment is once again linked to the performance of ritual. The Ciconian women derive their power from their identity as maenads and appear to be cut off from other social bonds and networks. Although the women are introduced with the word *nurus* (11.3), which means either "daughter-in-law" (OLD s.v. 1) or "young married woman" (OLD s.v. 2), and are thus defined in relation to their marital status, the rest of the narrative depicts them as operating in accordance with their religious identity as Bacchants (much like Quartilla in Petronius, as we have seen) and outside other social bonds. In other words, the women's empowerment is the result of a permanent opposition between their religious and social roles. In the context of Bacchic ritual, this opposition is temporary, but on the present occasion it emerges as permanent and destructive. As in Petronius and Seneca, here too we see an instance where the performance of ritual is commensurate

with women's successful negation of various norms (social, religious, familial) and their collective emergence as a vigorous alternative to male-dominated social and religious structures.

The religious framework within which the women's killing of Orpheus takes place offers their ritual voices as analogous to Orpheus'. Perverted, aggressive, and destructive, the women's religious expression stands in complete contrast to poetry, whose primary function is to tame and civilize (15–19). What is more, it demonstrates a formidable ability to overpower and destroy the male poetic voice. As we have seen in book 10, however, Orpheus too had encroached upon female expression by adopting the trappings of feminine ritual lament. As a result, the Bacchants' voices are raised to the same level as that of the greatest poet. They are caught up in a power conflict with him, vying for supremacy. At Orpheus' death, lamentation is no longer the province of women but is delegated to wild nature (44–49).[34] The final silencing of the maenads by Bacchus indicates that, while female religious expression can empower women, ultimate power rests with a superior, divine force. Yet the death of Orpheus cannot be reversed, so the power of the alternative poetic voice of the women is never completely erased.

This reading of the episode supports other recent interpretations of the *Metamorphoses*, such as Johnson's view of the poem as a meditation on the relationship between the poet and the powerful audience (2008: 96–116) or Hardie's argument that one of the central principles in the epic is the "commemoration of loss" (2002: 62–105). My examination of the intersection of gender, ritual, and power in the Orpheus narrative illuminates the importance of generic tensions within the *Metamorphoses*, especially between epic and elegy, as poetic genres are linked to gender categories. Epic's longstanding association with masculinity in Roman literary thought is embraced by the figure of Orpheus. His ultimate rejection of epic as a genre that can facilitate poetic expression reveals him as less masculine but still hopeful of success in his poetic endeavors (expressed by his success to move the shades of the underworld with his song). At this juncture Orpheus champions elegy as a genre that embraces both male and female modes of expression. In other words, elegy provides the space where the poet may voice his male desire for his beloved. At the same time, since the episode defines elegy by its purportedly original meaning as lament, it also presents it as including a traditionally female poetic enterprise. The blurring of boundaries between the women's and Orpheus' song is further suggested through the use of military imagery to describe both: Orpheus' poetic prowess is cast as a triumph, while the

Ciconian women's rites are military in nature.[35] The shared military associations between Orpheus and the Ciconian women suggest the possibility of a generic space where they could coexist.[36] Yet this is far from the case. After the loss of Eurydice, Orpheus assumes the status of mourner, a poetic status that traditionally belongs to women. What is more, the poet's encroachment on the women's poetic space causes a clash between Orpheus and the Ciconian women, with their song triumphing over his. Below is a schematic way to indicate the intersection of genre and gender in the episode:

Narrative	Orpheus	Underworld	Ciconian Women
Genre	Epic	Elegy	Lament
Gender	Male	Male & female	Female

Moreover, ritual, along with gender and genre, is used to explore questions of power and poetry. Women's religious rites become a locus for the articulation of the episode's preoccupation with the relationship between poetry and power. The narrative of Orpheus goes through a progression of propositions that explore the power that each genre affords the poet. Orpheus' initial rejection of epic and his ultimate failure in the realm of elegy (showcased by the loss of Eurydice) leads him to adopt the feminine poetic form of the lament. The Ciconian women, who oppose Orpheus, showcase their poetic powers through the performance of ritual rites that fall within the purview of women. In this instance, the power afforded the women through ritual and the poetry of lamentation proves devastating for the poet. As a result, the poet's empowerment through engagement with different genres of poetry is marked as a failed experiment. Below is the previous schema including all the elements deployed in the episode:

Narrative	Orpheus	Underworld	Ciconian women
Genre	Epic	Elegy	Lament
Gender	Male	Male & female	Female
Ritual	Wedding	Burial/lament	Bacchic rites
Power	Failure	Failure	Failure

The women do not fare much better than Orpheus in their poetic endeavor. Their song is associated with violence and destruction, and they are eventually silenced by Bacchus. As a result, they too are denied power of expression. As we have seen in chapter 4, the feminine poetic mode of lament often allows

women to express views that oppose accepted social norms. In this episode, their victory over Orpheus suggests that their poetry (Bacchic song and lamentation) is the only one that affords the poet any power. The eventual silencing of the Ciconian Bacchants, however, signals that a superior divine power is the ultimate purveyor of poetic expression.

Whether in the Roman political context Bacchus is to be taken as representing Augustus or the Principate as a whole, the statement arising from this argument is that the current power structure denies poetry its ability to affect those more powerful (the shades of the underworld, the Ciconian women).[37] What is of particular interest for this study is that women's religious power emerges as central to this conversation on power. In addition, it connects ritual and poetry as a unified force through which women can present an alternative to male power. In this light, the female poetic modes are not only on a par with but triumphant over the male poetic mode, even as they too are destroyed by the divine. In the following chapter we will examine how women's voices in the context of burial and lamentation are used as positive forces against the evils of civil war.

A New Hope

Burying the War Dead in Statius' *Thebaid* 12

The relationship between poetry and lamentation that Ovid articulates in his narrative of Orpheus offers fruitful ground for the exploration of a new poetics in Flavian epic. While for Ovid lamentation is a strictly feminine medium, fiercely protected by the women and perilous for the men who encroach upon it, in Statius' *Thebaid*, the women's role in burial and lamentation is explicitly linked not only to the desire to end the violence of civil war but also to the (male) poet's efforts to memorialize himself and his work. In what follows, I argue that in the *Thebaid*, burial rituals emerge as able to procure unity and peace.[1] Although not devoid of ambiguity, they play a crucial role as the epic comes to a close.[2] Because burial rites and lamentation are capable of ending the tragedy of civil war, the question of the importance of women's rituals for epic and empire comes to the forefront of any analysis of the poem's ending.

Burial is a central theme throughout the *Thebaid* and figures prominently in the poem's final book (Pollman 2001: 26), which begins with the aftermath of the battle between the brothers Eteocles and Polynices and focuses on the women's efforts to bring about ritual order by burying their dead. The epic *topos* of female supplication to a deity is here at work, but, unlike what happens in *Iliad* and *Aeneid*, where war-torn women supplicate the goddess Pallas,[3] the request of the supplication is granted. The epic concludes with burial and female lamentation. The burial rites performed by the women restore the ritual order corrupted by Creon's edict prohibiting the burial of Argives and achieve a reconciliation of the two sides. Women thus emerge as a force of unity and cohesion, while their alignment with the divinity Clementia enables them to articulate a voice of justice and reason that the men appear incapable of attaining. Nevertheless, the women's assumption of these powers also appears highly problematic. The book offers examples of sexual transgression (Argia) and dangerous empowerment (Bacchic rites) as well

as excesses in the women's performance of rituals. To be sure, these elements complicate the problem of the role of women as well as that of closure in the poem. But the fragility and precariousness of this restored ritual order do not negate the women's overall positive role at the poem's end, which is reinforced by the fact that at that point the poet aligns himself with the women and assumes the female voice of lamentation himself.[4]

The meaning of the burial rites performed at the end of Statius' *Thebaid* has long been the subject of debate, but it has not yet been examined from the point of view of ritual and its relationship to female agency. Statius emphasizes both the women's joy at the news of the end of the war and their sorrow in the face of loss and bereavement. In both vignettes, women act within the structures into which their lives are embedded, that is, their social and familial roles as mothers, wives, sisters, daughters. What is more, the narrative describes them as engaging in ritual roles as maenads (12.786–96) and mourners (12.800–07). Although in previous episodes the poem focused on specific women, such as Hypsipyle, Argia, or Antigone, book 12 also places new emphasis on the women's collective action. Collective female religious performances emerge as restoring the religious order that men have either neglected or corrupted.[5]

Moreover, Statius' narrative privileges the female voice of mourning by linking it explicitly to epic poetry's power for commemoration. As vehicles for the expression of male heroic deeds, epic poetry and lamentation offer praise from different, even divergent, points of view. Both epic and lament preserve a man's *kleos*: the poet's praise of a warrior's virtue perpetuates his fame in a manner analogous to the praise and commemoration enacted by his widow at his funeral (Murnaghan 1999: 203–04). As we noted earlier, however, lamentation threatens to undermine the ideal of *kleos* because it stresses the suffering caused by heroic death rather than the glory won by it.[6] Laments in epic offer a window into a female perspective as a counterpoint to male-centered action (Murnaghan 1999: 207) and may even undermine it, because they call into question "the normative modes enmeshed within it."[7] Statius continues the theme of gendered performance of poetry, and its link with the female ritual activity that we examined in the previous chapter, in ways that are similar to but also quite different from Ovid's.

In the last episodes of Statius' epic, ritual emerges as a space that admits both the destabilizing nature of grief and lamentation and their ability to create social unity.[8] Since ritual often simultaneously involves consent and resistance, it is a locus where social control is exercised while competing

beliefs can be expressed and cultural transformations may occur (see my discussion in the introduction:5–7). In this light, the women's ritual roles at the epic's close, as maenads or mourners, provide them with an outlet for expressing their subjectivity while simultaneously affirming their collective suffering and grief. Whereas in Ovid's book 11 the maenads embrace their ritual identity to the exclusion of all others, in Statius the women engaging in maenadism and burial operate within, not against, established social structures, even if they occasionally appear threatening. Ultimately, the women's collective action and unity contrasts with the discord of civil war that the men have championed throughout the poem.

Unity is a prominent element in the women's depiction and stands in sharp contrast with the divisiveness that has dominated the previous eleven books of the poem (see also Ahl 1986: 2890). The Argive women behave as a collective unit in their need to bury their dead. Ritual appears as a unifying, morally superior force promoting a point of view that opposes that of the men. The women's unity in grief is expressed by their shared sorrow (*sua uulnera cuique*, 107 [each has her own wounds]) and identical mourning attire (*par habitus cunctis*, 108; cf. also *femineum gregem*, 146). Their alignment with a superior moral code is confirmed by Juno's intervention, which ensures that the men will not stop them from executing their task (134–36). These themes are also operative in the moving scene of their supplication in Athens:

> omnis Erectheis effusa penatibus aetas
> tecta uiasque replent: unde hoc examen et una
> tot miserae? necdum causas nouere malorum,
> iamque gemunt. dea conciliis se miscet utrisque
> cuncta docens, qua gente satae, quae funera plangant
> quidue petant; uariis nec non adfatibus ipsae
> Ogygias leges inmansuetumque Creonta
> multum et ubique fremunt. Geticae non plura queruntur
> hospitibus tectis trunco sermone uolucres,
> cum duplices thalamos et iniquum Terea clamant. (12.471–80)

> Crowds of every age streamed out from the Erectheian homes and filled the rooftops and the streets. Where did that swarm come from, and so many women grieving as one? They do not yet know the cause of their evils, but they already groan. Through both gatherings, the goddess mingles, teaching the whole story, what race they came from, what deaths they mourn, or what they seek. And the women themselves in varying voices complain everywhere

> about the Ogygian laws and savage Creon. The Getic birds weep no less in their guest dwellings with their broken speech, when they cry out against a double bridal bed and criminal Tereus.

The women assume the position of suppliants, a position that, as we have often seen, implies utter helplessness. Nevertheless, the very act of supplication bestows upon them the power to tell their tale and raise their voice of mourning against the injustices of Creon's tyranny. The simile comparing the women with Thracian birds alludes to the Ovidian story of Philomela and Procne and underscores their empowerment: the two wronged sisters employed ordinary female activities (weaving and cooking) as a means of resisting the brutality of male authority (see chapter 11). The Argive women's supplication and desire for burial therefore suggest an alternative to the male perspective on civil conflict. The deity the women seek is also unique in many ways: located at the heart of the city of Athens, Clementia grants all prayers and accepts no blood sacrifices.[9] The absence of ritual killing, which is regularly sanctioned under religious custom and law, signals that we are faced with a different kind of divinity and associates the women with a new and superior religious order.

Nevertheless, the women's assumption of this powerful stance is as disturbing and destabilizing as the acts of men. The women's protests against Creon's brutal injustice are described with the verb *fremere*, a verb connoting anger that may lead to violent attack. The simile pointing to Procne and Philomela is also a reminder of the cruelty and excess of female revenge: the two sisters serve Tereus the cooked flesh of his own son.[10] The dangers inherent in women's empowerment are stressed throughout the episode and may take various forms: transgression of the roles appropriate for the female sex, exemplified in the behavior of Argia; the women's association with wild, uncivilized, and violent forces, expressed through their comparison to Bacchants; and their penchant for indulging in the excesses of grief, which can in turn lead to further bloodshed.

More specifically, women's transgression of the role appropriate for their sex is prominently displayed in Argia's actions as she embarks upon finding and burying her dead husband Polynices.[11] The Argive princess is governed by a courage characterized as unwomanly, attempting a task that causes her to abandon her sex (*hic non femineae subitum uirtutis amorem/ colligit Argia, sexuque inmane relicto/ tractat opus* [here Argia takes up a sudden love for unwomanly valor, and, having abandoned her sex, she performs an enormous

task], 177–79). Her desire to procure burial for the dead Polynices is expressed through the vocabulary of madness (*his anxia mentem / aegrescit furiis et, qui castissumus ardor, / funus amat* [troubled in her mind, she grows sick by this madness and loves death,[12] which is the most chaste passion], 193–95), while her intention to enter Thebes is phrased in phallic terms (*me sinite Ogygias . . . / penetrare domos* [allow me to enter the Ogygian homes], 198–99). Argia's defiance of gender norms is also illustrated in a startling simile comparing her to a priest of Cybele at the moment of self-castration (224–27). The most transgressive of behaviors, the changing of one's sex from male to female, corresponds with Argia's fearless venture to Thebes.[13]

The threatening nature of Argia's actions is also cast in Bacchic terms: we repeatedly hear of her frantic demeanor (226, 269, 278, 292). Though her desire to bury her husband is wholly noble, her fearless climb to the impassable wilderness of Mount Cithaeron is synonymous with Bacchic frenzy. The narrative does not let the reader forget that this is where the young king of Thebes, Pentheus, found death at the hands of his Bacchant mother (*Penthei . . . iugi*, 244). Antigone similarly displays signs of madness (*amens*, 354), engages in violent motion (*erumpit*, 356), and is likened to a raging lioness removed from her mother's protection and free to give vent to her anger fully (*fremitu quo territat agros / uirginis ira leae, rabies cui libera tandem / et primus sine matre furor*, 356–58). The regular depiction of Bacchants as untamed, wild creatures symbolically dramatizes the belief in women's tendency to fall victims to the violence of their emotions. As a result, women defy the role appropriate for their sex. In their zeal to perform their ritual duties, Argia and Antigone, though at first united,[14] now appear to enact a kind of competition, which mirrors that of the brothers[15] and which ultimately causes their ritual to fail to bring about reconciliation, as the magnificent scene of the brothers' dividing flame indicates (429–32).

The Bacchic theme in its problematic nature reaches a climax in the description of the women's closing ritual:

> gaudent matresque nurusque
> Ogygiae, qualis thyrso bellante subactus
> mollia laudabat iam marcidus orgia Ganges.
> ecce per aduersas Dircaei uerticis umbras
> femineus quatit astra fragor, matresque Pelasgae
> decurrunt: quales Bacchea ad bella uocatae

> Thyiades amentes, magnum quas poscere credas
> aut fecisse nefas. (12.786–93)
>
> The mothers and daughters-in-law of Thebes rejoiced, even as Ganges, subdued by the battling thyrsus, praised the women's orgies already drunk. And, look, over the shades of Dirce's peak on the other side the women's shouts shook the stars, and the Pelasgian mothers ran down; like raving Thyiads called to Bacchic wars, you'd think they were demanding a great crime, or had done one.

The Bacchic imagery used in describing both the Theban and the Argive women continues their representation as a collective unit and a model for the ultimate reconciliation among men (see also Braund 1996: 5). The passage begins by stressing the women's joy (*gaudent*). Since ritual affirms the feelings of unity in the communal lamentation of the dead, burials are often depicted as giving the mourners joy, however paradoxical this may seem in a funeral setting. Nevertheless, the two similes complicate the positive and life-affirming character of burial and the women's role in it.

The first simile compares the Theban women to the river Ganges, which succumbs to the Bacchants' influence. The likening of the women to the river underscores their formidable power; yet this power is portrayed as subject in turn to the control of Bacchants whose *thyrsi* bear the marks of war.[16] As a result, the women's power yields to forces contrary to civilization and peaceful coexistence and can therefore prove dangerous to the very unity and reconciliation they celebrate.[17] The text, however, also reminds the reader that the women, as mothers and daughters-in-law (*matresque nurusque*), operate within the bonds of the family structure. Their collective Bacchic joy may bestow them with power that can be intimidating, even warlike, but it is embedded in and ultimately asserts the social and familial systems that the civil war had endangered or destroyed.

The second simile likens the Argive women to raving maenads who run from the mountain to the city and engage in Bacchic violence (*nefas*). This poetic gesture intensifies the problems intimated by the previous simile. The women's descent from the mountain is the opposite of the typical maenadic movement from the city to the wild.[18] Rather than returning to their homes at the end of their ritual celebration, women bring the *nefas* of Bacchic war to civilized society. The poet uses images of perverted Bacchic ritual in order to describe the women's performance of burial, thus hinting at the fragility of ritual in its ability to procure unity within the two communities and

restore the disrupted order. At the same time, the poem's emphasis on the precariousness of ritual expresses anxiety that the power women exercise through their ritual activity may be used for destruction. Still, the women's shared identity as maenads and mothers (*matresque nurusque*, 786; *matresque Pelasgae*, 790) emphasizes their unity.

Bacchic ritual is not the only means through which the poem casts doubt on the effectiveness of the women's rites to achieve restoration. The women are also implicitly criticized as taking too much pleasure in the execution of their task of weeping (*gaudent lamenta nouaeque / exultant lacrimae* 793–94 [lamentations rejoice and fresh tears exult]). The pleasure arising from lamentation is well-attested in Greek and Latin literature: the act of mourning prolongs the connection between the mourner and the mourned, while it keeps the memory of the lost one alive and immortalizes the past in the present (Loraux 1998: 100).[19] Nevertheless, finding pleasure in lamentation can be dangerous, because it undermines the reintegration of the mourner into the world of the living; it also feeds feelings of rage and desire for revenge that may ultimately prevent burial rites from achieving unity and reconciliation. As a result, excessive grief can lead to violence: the women's hesitation as to whom to seek first, Theseus, Creon, or the bodies, is described in terms of violent movement (*rapit huc, rapit impetus illuc*, 794 [impulse hurries them here and there]), suggestive of the bellicosity of men. As one critic points out, the women's laments are "the first stirrings of those emotions which will send the descendants of the Seven to try—and to succeed—where their fathers had failed" (Ahl 1986: 2898).

The theme of excessive lamentation continues as the narrative of the burial rites draws to a close. Evadne and Deipyle both exemplify the extremes of such behavior:

> turbine quo sese caris instrauerit audax
> ignibus Euadne fulmenque in pectore magno
> quaesierit; quo more iacens super oscula saeui
> corporis infelix excuset Tydea coniunx;
> ut saeuos narret uigiles Argia sorori. (12.800–04)

> . . . how bold Evadne strewed herself on the flames she loved and sought the thunderbolt in the great breast; how Tydeus' unlucky wife made her excuses for him as she lay there and kissed his fierce corpse; how Argia told her sister of the cruel watchmen.

Evadne's famous leap onto her husband's pyre figures prominently in Euripides' *Suppliants* (1012–30). Statius mentions it only briefly. Nevertheless, Evadne's action contrasts sharply with her previous plea to Theseus to resolve the problem of burial and restore ritual order (see also Feeney 1991: 361–62). Deipyle, on the other hand, is shown performing the ritual act of catching the deceased's last breath with a kiss.[20] But her denial of the criminal nature of her husband's feats undercuts the closure she hoped her ritual act could effect. The list continues with Argia narrating her adventures to her sister. Argia's presence as a narrator at this juncture in the epic is important because it highlights her agency and subjectivity;[21] but equally revealing is her absence from participation at the present funeral, especially in view of the failure of the burial she had attempted earlier.

Ultimately, however, the women's rituals offset these ambiguities and assert the beneficial effects of their connection with religious law and justice. This link is first suggested by their association with Theseus: as we have seen, through their supplication to Clementia, the women articulate a superior moral code that stands opposite to the brutal authority of Creon. By acceding to their supplication and acting to ensure burial for the fallen Argives, Theseus emerges as an ally to the women and an advocate of Clementia's superior moral code.[22] Yet Theseus represents a male solution (violence) to the problem of fratricide, which contrasts with the female desire to see the conflict end through the powers of reconciliation and mercy.[23] Furthermore, the battle between Theseus and Creon produces an unsatisfactory solution, since much in the narrative suggests that it is far from ideal.

However one interprets Theseus' characterization in the *Thebaid*, a closer look at his behavior in ritual terms demonstrates his failure as a representative of the superiority of Clementia, which contrasts sharply with the success of the women.[24] Theseus offers Creon as sacrifice (*hostia*, 771) to a deity that abhors blood offerings, an act that effectively negates the validity of his way of resolving civil conflict. Moreover, his intervention, through its allusion to the final battle between Aeneas and Turnus in the *Aeneid*, promises to put an end not only to the conflict but also to the poem. But it is the women, not Theseus, who end the narrative of civil war through the performance of burial and ritual lamentation.[25] Despite the ambivalence accompanying the women's empowerment through the performance of ritual, they alone appear capable of achieving restoration of the disrupted order and unity between the warring sides, as the lament of Atalanta, Parthenopaeus' mother, makes plain:

Arcada quo planctu genetrix Erymanthia clamet,
Arcada, consumpto seruantem sanguine uultus,
Arcada, quem geminae pariter fleuere cohortes. (12.805–07)

How the Erymanthian mother lamented the Arcadian, the Arcadian, who kept his beauty though blood was gone, the Arcadian, for whom two armies grieved as one.

The narrative thus concludes with proper burial and lamentation: the threefold repetition at the beginning of successive lines of the name of Parthenopaeus (*Arcada*) points to the ritual practice of calling for the last time on the dead three times (Hardie 1997: 156). Moreover, the concluding line of the lament stresses the role of ritual as a unifying force: the young man is mourned equally by both sides. Thus women's ritual appears ultimately capable of channeling the madness of civil war into a power that serves the communal good.

The power that women exert through the performance of their ritual tasks is further emphasized by the connections the poet draws between epic and lament. As the narrator is about to conclude his description of the burial rites, he employs the epic *topos* of a hundred mouths to express his inability to relay the women's lamentations:[26]

non ego, centena si quis mea pectora laxet
uoce deus, tot busta simul uulgique ducumque,
tot pariter gemitus dignis conatibus aequem. (12.797–99)

If a god should loose my breast in a hundred voices, I could never equal with worthy effort so many funerals of common people and chieftains, so many shared lamentations.

uix nouus ista furor ueniensque implesset Apollo,
et mea iam longo meruit ratis aequore portum. (12.808–09)

For these hardly a new frenzy and Apollo's coming would suffice, and my ship, so long at sea, has already earned a harbor.

The poet's confession that he is unable to convey the women's lament implies a competition between his powers of narration and the women's lamentations (*non . . . aequem*), thus setting up a parallel between the epic voice and that of the women. The connection between the two is not surprising, as we have seen in the case of Ovid's Orpheus. After all, lament immortalizes the

past, emphasizes the loss the community has suffered, and seeks to provide relief by asserting the cohesiveness of the community of the living. These are all also functions of epic poetry. Statius thus is able to embrace the voice of women in order to express alternative points of view. In the final lines of the poem, where he addresses his work and envisages it as achieving immortality, he asserts the equation of epic with female lamentation. Far from displacing or silencing the unified voices of the women, the narrative's privileging of their lament and its linkage to poetry's power for commemoration act cumulatively, portraying the women's rites as potentially capable of securing lasting peace.

In conclusion, in Statius, women's burial rites, though not entirely benign, present a preferable alternative to male violence and constitute the only social mechanism capable of bringing ultimate resolution to civil conflict. Women are empowered through their role as mourners, able to achieve peace, even as the audience knows that the conflict is far from over with the campaign of the Epigonoi to follow.[27] In this sense, the poem rather resembles Homer's *Iliad,* which ends with women's lamentations and Hector's burial rites (24.718–804), while the fall of Troy and the death of Achilles lurk in the not too distant future.[28] In Statius, the male leaders' failure to end civil strife emphasizes the women's success and provides the only glimpse of hope in a world shattered by violence and tyranny.

In this section, we have seen that both Ovid, in his narrative of Orpheus, and Statius, in book 12 of the *Thebaid*, use lamentation in complex ways. On the one hand, they present burial and lamentation as opportunities for the expression of female agency and subjectivity that explicitly oppose male authority. On the other hand, both authors cast female lamentation as an alternative to poetic creation, conceding that the feminine voice has the potential to transform the genre of epic and its relationship with military glory and empire. Ovid's Orpheus rejects epic's ability to express the suffering and loss of the human experience and proposes elegy as a space where both male and female perspectives can coexist. Eventually, however, no genre is capable of being entirely successful, as divine power silences all.

Statius goes further than Ovid, claiming the failure of traditional epic to effect unity and restoration. Instead, the women exemplify unity, expressed in their joint performance of Bacchic and mortuary rites and in their shared suffering in their roles as wives, mothers, sisters, daughters. In addition, the execution of burial rites offers the women an opportunity to reclaim the

agency that civil war had denied them, an agency deeply embedded within their social and familial roles. While the performance of ritual allows women to articulate views that are potentially destabilizing, even destructive, their successful burial of the dead restores social cohesion. In all cases, female ritual performance allows the articulation of female subjectivity, whether it is used to convey divergent or convergent views vis-à-vis their socially defined roles and dominant ideology.

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PART III

BACCHAE

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Bacchic Rites in Greece and Rome

Dionysus was worshipped in both Greece and Rome from their earliest beginnings.[1] Associated with wine, fertility, ritual ecstasy, the theater, and the afterlife, the god had a profound influence on the lives of Greek and Roman men and women. In recent years, structuralist approaches identify him as a god who transgresses boundaries and reconciles opposites.[2] Childlike and feminine in appearance, with long locks of hair, he is nevertheless fierce and unyielding in his revenge upon those who wrong him.[3] As the god of wine, he offers the gift of ecstasy to all—men and women, rich and poor, free people and slaves. A deity associated with fertility and abundance, Dionysus makes the earth spontaneously produce milk, wine, and honey (E. *Ba*. 142–43) and presides over all vegetation and viticulture in particular.

In Greece, the god's rites (*orgia*) took place in biennial festivals, where the worshippers, the Bacchants or maenads, engaged in ecstatic ritual dancing. Our best source for such cult activity, Euripides' *Bacchae*, along with iconography from vases and architecture, has long puzzled scholars attempting to determine fact from artistic imagination.[4] Maenads are described as leaving their homes for the mountains possessed by divine ecstasy (but not necessarily intoxication);[5] texts and artifacts depict them celebrating in groups (*thiasoi*), wearing fawn skins (*nebroi*), carrying wands decked with ivy leaves (*thyrsoi*), or holding cymbals while dancing. Scholars agree that the most violent aspects of their worship, such as the tearing apart of wild animals (*sparagmos*) and the eating of raw animal meat (*omophagia*), were not routinely practiced but are mythical expressions of the symbolic significance of ritual. Some sources also depict them as engaging in baby kidnapping or as nursing wild animals.[6]

More subdued forms of worship are well-known. In classical Athens, the festival of the Great or City Dionysia, celebrated every four years, was one of the major religious events. Here a procession of the god's cult statue took

place, followed by theatrical performances that lasted for five days.[7] The civic and ideological import of this festival cannot be underestimated, as a huge body of work on Greek tragedy and religion attests.[8]

In Rome, Dionysus/Bacchus is early on identified with the Italic Liber and the Etruscan Fufluns.[9] A temple in his honor existed at the foot of the Aventine near the Circus Maximus, first built in 493 BCE. This temple, associated with freedom from tyrants, was where the festival of the Liberalia was celebrated in March every year (Degrassi 1963: 425, Ov. *F.* 3.713–808). Aside from this public festival, which, like that of ancient Athens, had a phallic procession,[10] Bacchus was also celebrated in mystery cult, which probably placed emphasis on his connections with the afterlife.[11]

Though Dionysiac mysteries were celebrated in the Greek world,[12] our most detailed source for the cult is Livy's highly prejudiced account of the Bacchanalia (39.8–19), which, however, gives very little information regarding the worship of the god,[13] as well as a *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* (CIL^2 581 = ILLRP 511).[14] Livy's narrative, as we shall see in the next chapter, focuses on the women's role in the cult and suppresses the importance of the authority of male priests, even though he mentions their existence. Recent work has signaled the importance of inscriptional evidence for our understanding of the workings of Bacchic worship in Rome and has offered a convincing argument that men participated in the cult to an equal degree to that of women and that mixed gender worship was common in many other religious practices (Schultz 2006: 82–93).[15]

Scholars speculate that in the mysteries, the initiand undergoes a change of identity. Burkert (1987: 96–97) reconstructs the mysteries as follows:

> An older stratum of testimonies regarding Dionysiac initiation puts the emphasis on purification and change of status, even change of identity. Through Demosthenes' invective against Aeschines we discern a nocturnal ceremony which includes putting on fawn skins and setting up a krater with wine. The initiands, seated, are then smeared with a mixture of clay and chaff; from the dark the priestess appears like a frightening demon; clean again and rising to their feet, the initiates exclaim "I escaped from evil, I found the better," and the bystanders yell in a high, shrieking voice (*ololyge*)[16] as though in the presence of some divine agent. In the daytime there follows the integration of the initiates into the group of celebrants, with the *thiasos* moving through the streets; people are crowned with fennel and white poplar; they dance and

> utter rhythmic cries, carrying the *kiste* and the *liknon*,[17] and some brandishing live snakes. Terror has become manageable for the initiate.

Seaford (1996: 43), on the other hand, believes that the initiand underwent an imagined death and that transvestism was involved, as is often characteristic of rites of passage. The initiand is considered both alive and dead, human and animal, male and female, mortal and immortal. Hostile sources, such as Livy, interpret as literal the symbolic death and rebirth of the initiand, while unveiling a phallus, or engaging in transvestism, is not understood as a hierophantic moment but as participating in illicit sexual acts.[18]

In most narratives, Roman authors omit or suppress the role of men in Bacchic worship and often represent women engaging in the type of maenadic activity that is more akin to descriptions from Greek tragedy. These passages, or larger episodes, share several common elements: maenadic exit to the mountains, represented as negating the civilized state of marriage and often signaling the destruction of the household and perhaps the state (Seaford 1994: 355–57, Panoussi 2009: 122–23); killing of male offspring, such as Euripides' Pentheus or Ovid's Itys in *Metamorphoses* 6, representing the aforementioned destruction of the household (see chapter 11); and collective female action enabled through the performance of Bacchic ritual, often affecting the entire community in destructive ways (Lemnian women in Valerius).

In the following chapters, I argue that Roman authors use Bacchic motifs to showcase the problematic nature of women's agency. Bacchic celebration is a context where female agency is always destructive and imperils the male in particular (Livy, Statius); representations of women resorting to Bacchic ritual symbolically reflect the distortion of the family and probe the idea of justice (Ovid *Met*. 6). Yet a close examination of these narratives detects the dissenting voices of those engaging in the condemned activity. Philomela and Procne's plight as victims of Tereus' brutality, for instance, finds expression in their reunion under Bacchic ritual; their ritual activity, then, emerges as a haven of sisterly affection in the face of absolute authority. In Valerius and Statius, female agency enabled by maenadism may initially appear ambivalent or negative, but the heroic behavior of Hypsipyle within the same ritual context shows a positive aspect of feminine leadership. In all cases, maenadism and female empowerment therein are extensively used to serve a host of narrative strategies as well as to explore personal, familial, social, sexual, and poetic concerns.

Roman Bacchae

Dionysiac Mysteries, Masculinity, and the State in Livy's Bacchanalian Narrative

In the previous sections, we have often seen the conflation of wedding and burial rituals with elements stemming from maenadic madness. It is fitting to begin the section on Roman Bacchants by examining a text that focuses on the Bacchic mysteries practiced in Rome. Livy's narrative of the Bacchanalia reflects many of the beliefs and prejudices we encounter in almost every text containing representations of women engaging in Bacchic activity, within the context either of maenadism or of mystery cult. Livy's text showcases the intimate ways in which Bacchic worship is linked particularly to women in Roman thought (more so than in Greek), allowing them to exercise unparalleled agency both in the private and the public sphere.

Livy's narrative of the Bacchanalian affair of 186 BCE (39.8–19) describes the Roman state's interference in the practice of Bacchic mysteries. Livy presents the event as a violent but necessary shift of power. Initially controlled by women, the cult is now carefully monitored by the state and is purged of the sexual excesses and moral turpitude that previously characterized it. In other words, Livy dramatizes a process through which Roman religious practice is brought to coincide with the state's view of religious, moral, and sexual norms by means of legal restrictions. The state's intervention is necessary because the celebration of the Bacchic mysteries, a religious activity primarily belonging to the sphere of women, spills over to the sexual practices of male citizens, especially those of young age, and threatens their identity as Romans.

In the case of the Bacchanalian affair of 186 BCE, we are fortunate to possess both Livy's detailed narrative and a decree issued by the Roman senate (*Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* CIL^2 581 = ILLRP 511) listing the measures taken to suppress it.[1] As a result, we have been able to study Livy's narrative as a historical document in conjunction with the text of the *Senatus*

consultum and from a literary perspective.[2] As scholars have noted, Livy's account displays many elements familiar from Roman comedy (Scafuro 1989, Walsh 1996), using a juxtaposition of genders (men versus women) to articulate broader differentiations between female and male social roles, the private household and the Roman state, and what constitutes what is foreign and what is Roman.

Livy begins his story with the affair between a well-to-do ex-prostitute, Faecenia Hispala, and a young Roman knight, Publius Aebutius. His corrupt stepfather, Sempronius Rutilus, and mother, Duronia, plot against him by arranging his initiation into the Bacchic mysteries. They are certain that Aebutius will either be murdered or will engage in such illicit activities that he can be easily blackmailed. Hispala, who happens to have inside knowledge of these mysteries, reveals the plot to Aebutius, who seeks advice from his paternal aunt, Aebutia. She urges him to speak to the consul Postumius. The latter, after consulting his mother-in-law, Sulpicia, in order to determine the credibility of all these witnesses, interviews Hispala, who repeats her story to him. Postumius, convinced that this is a calamity affecting not just Aebutius but the state as a whole, calls a meeting of the Senate and a public assembly, whereby he helps pass a series of decrees for the protection of all Roman youths from moral corruption or death.[3] In one of these decrees, Hispala's services to the Roman state are rewarded with a host of privileges conferring on her full Roman citizenship status, including permission to marry Aebutius.

In this chapter, I focus on the episode as a literary and ideological artifact and argue that it illuminates women's agency in relation to their religious duties. The state perceives this agency as threatening and pernicious. Although Livy's text exhibits an obvious moral compass, the women's roles and practices that are brought into the spotlight emerge as complex and fluid. For instance, proper feminine social and familial roles are complicated when Aebutius' mother, a proper Roman *matrona*, fails in her duties, whereas the former slave prostitute, Faecenia Hispala, succeeds in helping save the state. By extension, the institution of marriage is presented in a distorted form (Aebutius' mother cannot successfully balance her duties as wife and mother), while the ideal of marital bliss is embodied in the eventual union of Aebutius and Hispala. This idealized couple, however, does not fall within the usual Roman notions of marriage: Hispala is not a young virgin but an older *scortum*, and Aebutius is not only inexperienced but at risk of being disenfranchised as a Roman citizen.

Furthermore, the women's control of the Bacchic mysteries actively jeopardizes young men's successful transition into adult male citizenship.[4] Livy correlates women's empowerment with young men's disempowerment. An examination of his narrative shows that women's empowerment through their celebration of the mysteries abets and even promotes a relaxation of sexual mores, and threatens the social and sexual identity of young male citizens, who are made passive sexual objects. This threat is expressed not only by means of metaphors but also through the depiction of the mysteries as physically endangering young men's lives. The state intervenes and succeeds in realigning social views and practices, but only by inflicting terror and bloodshed on a vast portion of the citizen body.

This analysis of Livy's episode shows the importance of Bacchic rites in the Roman imagination. It also constitutes an apt demonstration of the normative notions that Romans sought to ascribe to women's religious action and to Bacchic rituals in particular. Livy's effort to outline these issues in his narrative is instructive. In the episode, he seeks to create clear-cut distinctions between the roles of men and women, private and state religion, and Roman and foreign customs and mores.

A schematic outline of Livy's use of these issues serves as a useful starting point for understanding how other authors manipulate Roman beliefs and prejudices vis-à-vis the Bacchic cult in order to express various tensions, anxieties, ambiguities and rifts in the fabric of Roman ideology. Without assuming that Roman ideas about Bacchic rites are stable and unchanging, one can argue that Livy's account provides a dependable measure against which we can gauge divergent or converging notions in other authors' narratives. To be sure, Livy looks at the events of 186 BCE from the perspective of the first century BCE, and thus inevitably projects views current in the Augustan period onto Roman Republican times. My purpose is not to examine Livy's account for its historicity, so I will not focus on his credibility as a source. I rather concentrate on the ways in which his narrative allows us a glimpse of enduring ideas about gender, religion, and the state in Roman thought.

Livy's Bacchanalian episode revolves around a clash of polarities which help clarify its moral message. The men are either opposed to the corrupt women or are dominated by them: the integrity of Aebutius' *domus* is threatened by Duronia and her husband, and the morally upright households of Aebutia and Sulpicia are juxtaposed to it. Also opposing Aebutius' corrupt *domus* is the state, whose purity is expressed by the solemnity of the sum-

moning of the *contio* (assembly) and the consul Postumius' careful and thorough investigation of the matter. The state thus safeguards the sanctity of households such as those of Aebutia and Sulpicia, and acts to protect that of Aebutius. Likewise, polarities characterize the description of religion. The Bacchic mysteries are cast as foreign, barbaric, and hostile to Roman morality and social values, whereas *religio* as performed by the Roman state is protective of the citizens.

In the same vein, the morally bankrupt Bacchic rites, which are celebrated during the night, are opposed to Postumius' and the Senate's actions, which take place during the day. Nighttime is synonymous with secrecy, conspiracy, and corruption, whereas daytime is associated with openness, justice, and moral rectitude. Finally, *stuprum* emerges as a condemnable practice, jeopardizing the sexual, civic, and physical integrity of Roman males. Excessive female power, exercised during the celebration of the Bacchic mysteries, fosters engagement in *stuprum*. The moral force that seems to oppose it is *pudicitia*, which, however, is constantly lacking.[5] In this light, women's ritual power is dangerous not only for the moral health of Roman women but also, most importantly, for the making of Roman male citizens.

Despite the symmetrical juxtaposition of opposites in Livy's account, the narrative structure is decidedly uneven. The first part, the story of young Aebutius and the *scortum* Hispala, is longer and dramatic, containing numerous elements from Roman comedy (Scafuro 1989: 125–28, Walsh 1996: 191–99). The second part, including the consul Postumius' actions and his address to the assembly, is brief, more focused on a rapid sequence of events, and, if scholarly attention is any indication, less interesting than the first part. As a result, the emphasis on the threat that the cult presents to the state helps portray it as grave and deserving of the state's actions to suppress it. At the same time, however, the episode as a whole provides elements for analysis that make its moral message more ambiguous than the narrative's careful juxtaposition of polarities asserts.

In what follows, I will first examine how the narrative articulates opposites to create unambiguous moral choices for the reader. Next, I will examine the correlation between women's rites and sexual deviance, which is particularly dangerous for Roman male citizens' moral and physical selves. I argue that the narrative complicates this message by mirroring the violence exhibited by the Bacchants against the violence exercised by the state. This in turn raises questions about the relationship between the state's moral agenda and the citizenry's religious and sexual practices.

Noise and Moral Disorder

The boisterous nature of the Bacchic rites is used by Livy and other Greek and Roman authors (e.g. E. *Ba*. 120–34; Cat. 64.254–64) to express a reversal of the opposition between order and disorder. Livy emphasizes noise in order to make several points relating to his argument that the mysteries promote moral disorder. The main characters within the story echo the narrator's opinion that Bacchic mysteries are raucous because they are part of a more generally uncivilized behavior and aim to conceal wicked deeds. Put differently, their noise constitutes a tangible extension of their immorality and the danger they pose to Roman society and state. Livy makes the point in a subtle but effective way, with a trio of references to the mysteries' wild noise (*ululatus*), strategically placed to form a climactic progression. First, there is a statement of fact by the omniscient narrator:

> occulebat uim quod prae *ululatibus tympanorumque et cymbalorum strepitu* nulla *uox quiritantium* inter *stupra* et caedes *exaudiri poterat*. (39.8.8)
>
> The violence was covered up by the fact that, on account of *the howlings and the crashing of the tambourines and cymbals*, the *voices* of the initiands *crying for help* could not be heard *amid the debauchery* and murders.

The passage asserts that noise is synonymous with a particular kind of disorder and uncivilized behavior that leads to the dissolution of moral principles and results in murder. The participants in the rite are represented as unwilling victims crying for help (*quiritantium*),[6] forcibly subjected to *stuprum*, and eventually murdered (*caedes*), presumably because of their resistance. Soon after this statement, Hispala, in her speech to Postumius, virtually repeats the narrator's earlier comments in 39.8.8:

> Eos deducere in locum qui circumsonet *ululatibus* cantuque symphoniae et *cymbalorum et tympanorum* pulsu, *ne uox quiritantis* cum per uim *stuprum* inferatur *exaudiri possit*. (39.10.7)
>
> They brought them [i.e. the initiands] to a place that resounds with *howlings* and the singing of songs as well as the beating of *cymbals and tambourines*, so that the *voice of the initiate crying for help* as he is forcibly subjected to *stuprum could not be heard*.

The emphasized words display a pronounced similarity between the statement of the narrator and Hispala's account. In my opinion, the connection of

the two passages is too close to be coincidental. Both the narrator and Hispala express the same point of view vis-à-vis the purpose of the mysteries' noise. Hispala thus emerges as representing the discourse of order and morality in the narrative, an alter ego of the omniscient narrator. Although as a *scortum* she is potentially an agent of moral disorder, she endorses the morality sanctioned by the state. She also uses the vocabulary and conceptual framework that the narrative as a whole seeks to illustrate and promote.[7]

Hispala's success in this regard becomes obvious in the last reference to Bacchic noise, which occurs during Postumius' speech to the citizen body (*contio*):

> Bacchanalia tota iam pridem Italia et nunc per urbem etiam multis locis esse, non fama modo accepisse uos, sed crepitibus etiam ululatibusque nocturnis qui personant tota urbe, certum habeo, ceterum quae ea res sit ignorare. (39.15.6)
>
> I am certain that you have heard that the Bacchic mysteries have long taken place throughout Italy and now even in many places throughout the city; [you have heard this] not only from rumor but also from the nighttime bangings and howlings resounding all over the city; yet I am certain that you are not aware of what this thing is.

In this instance, consul Postumius, the agent of the state, shares Hispala's private knowledge and opinion with the entire citizen body. The consul's words reveal that the citizens are unaware of what is really happening, marking a contrast with Hispala's inside knowledge. Now Postumius, like Hispala, is the one who mediates in order to preserve moral order. His mention of the racket coming out of the celebration of the Bacchic mysteries connects the citizens' experience with Hispala's information and alerts them to the pernicious nature of the rites, which are synonymous with moral disorder and endanger the lives of Roman citizens. Postumius' mention of the disturbing sounds presents a climax in the progressive deployment of the argument that Bacchic noise is constitutive of disorder and violence. By using this motif, Postumius fully assumes Hispala's attitude toward the mysteries and shares it with the other male citizens. The narrator's point of view is thus successively repeated by two characters, first an insider, then a mouthpiece of the state.

Hispala, then, is shown to embody the value system of the state and becomes the agent through which Postumius is able to protect the citizen body. It is important to note here, however, that Hispala is the one with the inside

knowledge, without whom the true nature of the noise would remain hidden: in other words, it would just be noise to the citizens and the state, not the moral disorder that she reveals it to be. Viewed in this context, the deployment of the motif of the Bacchic *ululatus* is part of Livy's strategy of aligning female and male, private ritual and religion sanctioned by the state, which have hitherto appeared at odds with each other.

Why does Hispala become the instrument of moral order? Does this not conflict with her social status as *scortum*? To answer these questions, I will now turn to examine the role of women in articulating civic ideology. Livy's greater narrative strategy presents women's "bonded" agency as instrumental for the preservation of the moral health of the state.

Reversal of Social Roles

The role of women—and of *matronae* specifically—as vital agents in this episode is worth investigating. The narrative juxtaposes positive and beneficial feminine behavior against its opposite. Faecenia Hispala, a former prostitute and slave, stands between the morally upright and corrupt *matronae*.[8] She initially inhabits both spheres but is eventually absorbed by the category of the proper *matrona* through the granting of full citizenship rights and her marriage to Aebutius. The episode's women are instrumental agents, propelling the plot forward. The Bacchants are agents of moral corruption; the good *matronae* alert the authorities to the problem at hand; and Hispala's testimony is the catalyst for the state's action. Yet there is also a certain symmetry in the way all women exercise agency. Hispala is able to reach the authorities through the protection of Aebutia's female *domus*.

The Bacchanalian narrative presents an abundance of mothers and daughters who fail to operate appropriately within the relational systems in which they are embedded. One of the most striking cases is that of Aebutius' mother, Duronia, who fails in her role as mother by siding with her new husband against her son's interests.[9] Livy deftly makes use of disease as a metaphor for deficient morality. In the opening of Aebutius' story, the narrator equates the cult with a contagious disease: *huius mali labes ex Etruria Romam uelut contagione morbi penetrauit*, 39.9.1 (the stain of this evil infiltrated Rome from Etruria, like the spread of a disease).[10] Next, Livy combines the traditional role of mothers as caretakers and healers of illness[11] with the motif of moral corruption as an ailment. Evidence of this we find in Duronia's arguments in favor of Aebutius' initiation into the mysteries. She argues that the initiation must occur in fulfillment of a vow she had made

when her son was sick in order to secure his recovery (*se pro aegro eo uouisse, ubi primum conualuisset, Bacchis eum se initiaturam*, 39.9.4 [she had vowed for him while he was sick that she would initiate him into Bacchic rites as soon as he had recovered]). To be sure, the irony of the statement is somewhat heavy-handed. Since her son's moral corruption is a disease much greater than any physical ailment, Duronia abuses her maternal duty, which is to keep her son disease-free. Quite the contrary: she actively conspires to cause Aebutius' social, legal, and even physical death.

Two other *matronae* are also instrumental in securing a safe haven for Aebutius and Hispala and for setting in motion the actions that will result in the salvation of the state. Aebutius, who appears to have no other surviving male relatives,[12] reaches out to his aunt Aebutia, who immediately advises him to contact the authorities. As a paternal aunt, Aebutia's actions affirm the problematic behavior of Aebutius' own mother, while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of patriliny for preserving the integrity of the Roman family structure. Postumius, in turn, consults with his mother-in-law, Sulpicia, about the credibility of Aebutia before he has a meeting with her.[13] Aebutia, making a heartfelt plea to the consul herself, acts as a proper mother to Aebutius (39.11.7) and contrasts sharply with the actions of his real mother.

Both Aebutius and Postumius rely on the judgment and advice of their female relatives before they take up any action. Moreover, Aebutius' complaint to the consul appears insufficient, since Postumius seeks additional corroboration from Sulpicia, and casts light on Aebutius' sociopolitical status as somewhat less credible or important. That a woman would offer that corroboration attests the consequence of *matronae* in the social and political sphere. The narrator adds his own positive appraisals: Sulpicia is characterized as a woman of authority (*grauem feminam*, 39.11.4) and confirms that Aebutia is an honest woman of the old ways (*probam et antiqui moris feminam*, 39.11.5).

Livy uses several dramatic devices from comedy and tragedy that confirm Roman stereotypes about feminine behavior and offset the virtuous nature of the *matronae* and their importance for the welfare of male citizens. Both Aebutia and Hispala are depicted as crying, fainting, or fearful for their life and for that of their loved ones.[14] Such touches of drama not only add flavor to the narrative but also reveal deep-seated notions about the nature of women. Despite these demeaning stereotypes, the *matronae* start unraveling the "conspiracy," which occurs within the physical boundaries of a *domus* whose head is ostensibly a woman. Hispala divulges the Bacchic secrets

in the inner part of Sulpicia's house (*in interiorem partem aedium*, 39.12.3), which contrasts sharply with the morally corrupt households that abet the secrecy of the Bacchic rites. The integrity of Sulpicia's *domus* means that its innermost space is able to withstand the unveiling of secrets that destroy households. Her presence serves to comfort and encourage Hispala, who would be understandably terrified by having to speak to the consul; she also represents the virtue of the entire household—a safe haven for moral uprightness.

Between these two types of women stands the former slave prostitute, Faecenia Hispala. Despite her low social status, she possesses an integrity that helps end the moral corruption of the Roman state. Hispala assumes some of Aebutius' expenses (since his family did not provide him with adequate funds) and warns him against the dangers of Bacchic initiation: in this, she acts as the type of mother that Aebutius obviously lacks. She acts as a proper wife, providing sexual companionship and legally offering her fortune to him after her death (39.9.7).[15] Hispala also acts as other respectable *matronae* in ensuring, at great personal peril, the safety of all male citizens and therefore the welfare of the entire Roman state. Her status is thus marked by a certain fluidity and affords her an opportunity to move between the opposing worlds of Bacchic corruption and matronly *pudicitia*.[16] At the same time, as scholars have noted (Scafuro 1989: 129–31, Walsh 1996: 196–97), her status aligns her with the slave of Roman comedy, who similarly oscillates between authority and oppression.[17]

It is important here to delve into the reasons behind Livy's adoption of the model of the comedic slave in the case of Hispala. In her study of the slave in Roman comedy, Kathleen McCarthy concludes (2000: 212–13) that the image of the carefree and clever slave, although contrasting with the harsh realities of his or her life, justifies slavery in the eyes of the masters. The temporary opposition (but eventual collusion) of the fictive slave with the social and political order that demands his or her servitude further validates that order.[18] Hispala's role in Livy's narrative is similar. Just as the fictive slave in Roman comedy is temporarily opposed to social hierarchies by assuming authority, so in the Bacchanalian affair, Hispala assumes authority that is not appropriate for her status as a *scortum*, but is on a par with that of other aristocratic *matronae* such as Aebutia and Sulpicia. The consul's appropriation of Hispala's "authority" and moral stance justifies the social hierarchies that demand Hispala's oppression and submission.

In addition, as McCarthy demonstrates (2000: 212), the slave's childlike qualities in comedy accord with a paternalistic view of the slave as in need of a master and thus argue for the necessity of slavery. Hispala's gender as a woman is analogous to the childlike nature of the fictive slave. Hispala eventually benefits from the paternalism exhibited by the consul and the state that he represents. She is rewarded with a change of social status from *scortum* to *matrona*, since she is eventually allowed to marry Aebutius.

Another reason for Livy's appropriation of comedic protocols is that it strengthens his narrative's moral message by presenting an opposition between Hispala and the morally corrupt Roman *matronae*. This symmetric opposition—the *nobile scortum* versus the corrupt *matronae*—eventually serves to accentuate the problematic nature of women engaging in Bacchic behavior and the gravity of the social problems engendered by their activity. On the other hand, the collusion of Hispala with the state's values emphasizes its moral superiority even further because it is juxtaposed to the other women's reckless disregard for their role as mothers and wives. Hispala's agency and authority are contrasted with those exhibited by the women practicing the cult. Nevertheless, both are eventually placed under the control of the state. The state is established as the only source of authority capable of regulating ritual activity for both Roman women and men.[19]

Hispala's marginal and fluid social status also presents an option that cannot be safely sustained: the existence of a woman of high moral fiber but low status contrasting with the dubious morality of the women of the citizen class. This option is eventually eliminated by conferring citizen status upon Hispala. As Scafuro (1989: 126) perceptively notes, this is not the case in New Comedy, which "never allows for a resolution based on the actual granting of citizen rights to a courtesan or to a member of that class—or to any noncitizen." Livy here appears to depart from the comedic prototype to create a more inclusive state than the one depicted in comedy for the purpose of eventually restoring the coincidence of morality and status.[20]

Yet this departure from the comedic prototype is also telling of a perhaps more radical appropriation of women's ritual agency by the state's processes of ideological formation. The figure of Hispala not only exposes a fissure in the ideological alignment of character with status, but also provides a model for her absorption by the state in terms that properly belong to the *modus operandi* of women's rituals. Hispala's isolation in the *domus* of Aebutia (to protect her from retaliation by the Bacchants) corresponds with the isolation of

initiands before they are deemed worthy of entering as full members of the cult.[21] Scafuro (1989: 131) notes that Hispala's isolation is in fact a form of purification, similar to "the ten-day period of sexual abstinence that precedes initiation into the Bacchic cult."

This is a striking instance of the state's practices imitating ritual. The state is thus shown not as negating female agency arising from the performance of (Bacchic) ritual, but as symbolically absorbing it. Hispala's integration as a nonanomalous entity into Roman society is predicated upon a "purification" which is granted through her symbolic partaking in female religious practices that are normally performed by women of the social category in which she deserves to belong. Aebutia's *domus* is a female-controlled space, but one that is sanctioned and controlled by the state. Accordingly, Hispala emerges from her time in Aebutia's house as a full member of Roman society, a status confirmed by her wedding to Aebutius and her assumption of full citizenship.

Women's rituals and the Bacchic mysteries in particular thus emerge as a locus for the creation of social identity for women. This forms a stark contrast with their previous depiction as a haven for every sexual depravity, to which my discussion will now turn.

Women's Rituals and Sexual Deviance

As we have seen, Livy's depiction of the Bacchic mysteries casts them as an activity dominated by women. Apparently such women-controlled rites not only constitute a locus where men engage in shameful sexual acts, but also promote and even forcibly impose them on young male participants. The connection between the women's ritual dominance and illicit sexual activity is made in no uncertain terms in Postumius' speech to the assembly: *primum igitur mulierum magna pars est, et is fons mali huiusce fuit*, 39.15.9 (first, then, the great majority are women, and that was the source of this evil).[22]

The narrator carefully—if not explicitly—connects women's control of the Bacchic rites with deviant sex practices. Both in the opening paragraph and throughout the episode, the omniscient narrator and the two main characters, Hispala and Postumius, repeatedly refer to the happenings in the mysteries using terms such as *stuprum*, correlating the cult with sexual corruption.[23] They also marshal longstanding notions regarding women's "natural" proclivity toward drinking and sex. For example, in the episode's opening paragraph, the narrator castigates the practice of drinking and feasting in the context of ritual (39.8.5: *additae uoluptates religioni uini et epularum* [the pleasures of

wine and banquets were added to religion]). Although he does not directly link it to the women,[24] he hints at women's well-known fondness for wine:

> cum uinum animos <mouisset>[25] et nox et mixti feminis mares, aetatis tenerae maioribus, discrimen omne pudoris exstinxissent, corruptelae primum omnis generis fieri coeptae, cum ad id quisque quo natura pronioris libidinis esset paratam uoluptatem haberet. (39.8.6)
>
> When wine had shaken their minds, and night, and the mingling of men with women, tender youths with older folk, had overcome every barrier of shame, vices of every sort began to take place, since each person had ready at hand the pleasure to fulfill the desire toward which his nature would be more inclined.

The passage expresses the idea that drinking promotes sexual desire and that, in the case of women in particular, it is more or less synonymous with adultery. The Roman state had laws in place prohibiting women from drinking.[26] These legal sanctions reflected a belief that drinking presented great danger for the virtue of Roman women. Another contributing factor relating women's control of the ritual with the sexual promiscuity in the mysteries is Livy's repeated mention of the "mixing" of men with women.[27] It seems that whenever men and women mix, women's "natural" tendency for sexual excess takes over, and men, especially young men, fall prey to its pernicious influence. Livy sees a single outcome from drinking and evening gatherings of mixed sexes: illicit sexual activity. In other words, drunk men and women of all ages will have no resistance to the opportunity for illicit sexual pleasure (*paratam uoluptatem*) and will surrender to their sexual desires (*natura pronioris libidinis*), which is to be understood as being inherently deviant (*discrimen omne pudoris exstinxissent*). As a result, the women's control of the rites makes it possible for sexual excess and moral dissolution to take place. Both imperil male citizens, as they affect their sexual practices and, as we shall soon see, their social identity.

Within this framework, we should reexamine the conclusion of the episode's opening paragraph, which refers to the nocturnal nature of the Bacchic mysteries and the disruption they cause to civilized society with their raucous noise. We have previously interpreted the prominence of these qualities in the narrative as constitutive of the mysteries' status as "other" and as part of a system of polarities around which the episode's conflict is structured. What is important to note here is that both elements, night and noise,

facilitate secrecy and violence, poisons and trickery (*uenena*, *dolo* 39.8.8), all ideas primarily associated with women.

Related to the issue of the women's control of the mysteries is the problem of acceptable religious practice. Postumius' speech to the *contio* argues against the women-controlled Bacchic rites. He begins with a distinction between "correct" and "incorrect" *religio*. The former is practiced by the Roman citizens who comprise the *contio*[28] and is different from that of the women, which the consul characterizes as depraved, foreign, and lustful:

> nulli unquam contioni, Quirites, tam non solum apta sed etiam necessaria haec sollemnis deorum comprecatio fuit, quae uos admoneret hos esse deos *quos* colere, uenerari precarique *maiores uestri instituissent*, non illos qui prauis et externis religionibus *captas* mentes uelut furialibus stimulis ad omne scelus et ad omnem libidinem agerent. (39.15.2–3)

> Never for any assembly, citizens, has this formal prayer to the gods been not only so suitable but even so necessary, a prayer which reminds you that these are the gods *whom your ancestors had appointed* to be worshipped, venerated, and to receive your prayers, not those who would drive our minds, *enslaved* by depraved and foreign rites, as if by the Furies' scourges, toward every crime and every lust.

Postumius calls attention to the performance of the solemn oath by the consul and the citizens of the assembly as a fresh reminder of the proper character of traditional religion, instituted by the Roman ancestors (*quos . . . maiores uestri instituissent*) and transmitted to their present-day descendants. The rite's Roman character and long history are ensured by its continued observance by the male citizens and are thus starkly opposed to the women-controlled, foreign, and degenerate Bacchic mysteries.

The passive participle *captas* denotes the passivity and enslavement that the mysteries impose on young Romans. Postumius further employs a vivid image of the Furies' scourge to invoke fear and notions of punishment.[29] The Furies mentioned here, however, are an instrument not of justice but of incitement to sexual and criminal offenses. The idea of an external, female demonic agent driving the young men away from traditional religion plays upon the same ideas of the threatening nature of a *religio* that is controlled by women. Yet the problem of the proper control of *religio* is intimately connected with the integrity of male sexual identity, which is endangered by the activities practiced in the course of the mysteries.

Male Corruption

Male homoerotic activity is at the root of the moral problem that the mysteries represent for the Roman state. The mysteries foster *stuprum*, a notion that is crucial for our understanding of the dynamics of sexual politics in the episode. To be sure, *stuprum* is not necessarily synonymous with same-sex congress. Adams (1982: 201) and Williams (2010: 67) note that it encompasses all disgraceful sexual behavior, including but not limited to homoerotic behavior.[30] Livy may well have both types of behavior in mind, since *stuprum* also affects the women's *pudicitia*. *Stuprum* emerges as even more perilous for men, however, because it endangers their social identity (see also Langlands 2006: 119). If we examine the instances where *stuprum* is mentioned in the episode, whether by the narrator or through the main characters (Hispala or Postumius),[31] we see that it is often combined with the verb *patior*, indicating that the recipient of the act is passive and at times unwilling.[32] We can then conclude that *stuprum* is an illicit sexual act, imagined in this particular case as forced upon the participants, and working as some kind of pollution, infecting the victim with the desire to inflict it on others. Accordingly, we are not dealing with a case of undifferentiated *stuprum*, but one that relates to the integrity of male social, political, military, and personal identity.[33]

After Postumius has reminded his audience of the superiority of state-controlled *religio*, he proceeds to connect *stuprum* with effeminacy. For Postumius, the only possible outcome of a women-controlled ritual is the negation of male identity. The speech begins by mentioning *stupra* as perpetrated by both men and women but gradually focuses on the homoerotic activities performed by men and the problems it causes in their ability to come of age into full citizen status:

> Si quibus aetatibus initientur mares sciatis, non misereat uos eorum solum, sed etiam pudeat. Hoc sacramento initiatos iuuenes milites faciendos censetis, Quirites? His ex obsceno sacrario eductis arma committenda? Hi cooperti stupris suis alienisque pro pudicitia coniugum ac liberorum uestrorum ferro decernent? (39.15.13–14)
>
> If you knew at what ages males were initiated, not only would you feel pity for them but also shame. Do you think, citizens, that young men initiated in this cult ought to become soldiers? That weapons ought to be entrusted to those brought up in this polluted shrine? That those who have been buried in

> their own debauchery and that of others would distinguish themselves in war defending the chastity of your wives and children?

Postumius relates the ability of men to become soldiers with their engagement in *stuprum* and the feminization it brings, thus connecting *stuprum* and same-sex erotic practices. Once exposed to *stuprum*, forcibly or voluntarily, the young men are not able to become trustworthy soldiers. The rituals provide the opportunity for the permanent corruption of young men.[34] In other words, with the women controlling *religio*, men are necessarily feminized. This new sexual identity, the result of rejecting the accepted male sexual roles, makes it impossible for them to fulfill their social identities as soldiers, husbands, or sons.[35]

According to Postumius, it is impossible for effeminate men to remain contained as a marginalized population due to personal choice; quite the contrary, their status is linked with crime and deceit and as such poses a serious threat to the integrity of the state:

> Minus tamen esset, si flagitiis tantum effeminati forent (ipsorum id magna ex parte dedecus erat), <et> a facinoribus manus, mentem a fraudibus abstinuissent; nunquam tantum malum in re publica fuit, nec ad plures nec ad plura pertinens. (39.16.1–2)

> Nevertheless, it would be less serious if they became effeminate by their misconduct (that was in great measure their own disgrace) and if they had kept their hands from crime and their thoughts from fraud; never has there been so much evil in the state, nor affecting so many people in so many ways.

Postumius repeatedly stresses the problems associated with these men—their inability to conform to the norms of their sex, their questionable moral character, and their growing numbers—in an effort to present cogent arguments for the state's action against them.[36] In other words, the intervention of the state is primarily a reaction to male homoerotic practices, which are perceived as enabled and abetted by the women's excessive religious power. For Postumius, women and homosexuals conspire to take over the Roman state: *Crescit et serpit cotidie malum. Iam maius est quam ut capere id priuata fortuna possit; ad summam rem publicam spectat*, 39.16.3 (each day this evil grows and creeps along. Now it is greater than a private matter; it aims for the control of the state).

The consul links the spreading of the cult to the primarily sexual desires purportedly aroused by its practices. The consul uses the word *libido* twice to describe the attraction that the cult presents to its participants (39.16.5 and

39.16.11). He links *religio* with *libido*—a connection facilitated by the casting of the rites hitherto as women-controlled, sex-crazed, and foreign. According to Postumius, the combustible mix of religious fear and sexual excess makes these rites particularly dangerous for the Roman state. He declares every male susceptible to these dangers, from impressionable youths to adult Roman citizens: "*Ne quis etiam errore labatur uestrum, Quirites, non sum securus*" (I am not free from worry that one of you, citizens, may slip by error, 39.16.6). Effeminacy, uncontrolled sexual appetite, and unacceptable sexual practices constitute a form of pollution that infects the citizenry and threatens the preservation of the male familial, social, political, and military identity.

Stuprum et Caedes

Aside from the perils that illicit sexual activity presents for the mysteries' male initiates, Livy stresses their violent nature and the threat they pose to young men's lives. The threat to the physical integrity of male citizens is an extension of their social death. Acts of violence against morals, laws, and the sanctity of life are par for the course for the Bacchants: *stuprum* is closely followed by murder (*caedes*). *Stuprum* assails not only the social identity of the citizens but also the cohesiveness of the social fabric, which is held together by a legal system that protects from fraud and punishes for murder.

Nevertheless, the violence of the Bacchants is mirrored by the violence the state visits upon them. The narrative is constructed in such a way as to support the claim that the number of deaths resulting from the state's crackdown is commensurate to the menace presented by the cult. State violence is thus justified for the greater good, as opposed to the mysteries' violence, which is immoral, illegal, and murderous. In the end, however, the question arises whether the state's need for violence to control the cult provides evidence for its popularity and the wide acceptance of its practices. Livy's narrative carefully crafts an alignment between morality and state violence. This may arise from a need to cast cult practices as deviant, when in reality they were probably more accepted and less intimidating than the narrative suggests.

Livy's opening paragraph carefully outlines a link between *stupra* and abuse of legal procedures, ranging from forged wills to false witnesses, and culminating in murder. Sex is therefore synonymous with *uis*, that is, violence against the state's citizens. Sexual corruption goes side by side with legal or actual death:

> Nec unum genus noxae *stupra* promiscua ingenuorum feminarumque erant, sed falsi testes, falsa signa testamentaque et indicia ex eadem officina exibant, uenena indidem intestinaeque caedes, ita ut ne corpora quidem interdum ad sepulturam exstarent. Multa dolo, pleraque per *uim* audebantur. (39.8.7–8)
>
> Nor there was only one kind of vice, *illicit sex* of men and women, but also perjured witnesses, forged signatures and wills, as well as indictments, came out of the same factory. From this place also came poisonings and secret murders, so that sometimes not even bodies would be found for burial. Many things were attempted by treachery and even more by *violence*.

According to this passage, the legal system is under attack by the cult's practitioners, who are so utterly immoral that they routinely kill. Furthermore, they are so successful that they are able to avoid prosecution for these murders and have resources that permit them to extinguish any trace of their crimes. Poison emerges as the weapon of choice, a weapon traditionally associated with women, and goes hand in hand with a special kind of *uis*: that which is achieved through trickery (*dolo*).

Once again, Livy uses characters to echo the narrator's point of view on the deadly combination of *stuprum* and *uis* within the context of the mysteries. The narrator's main points are repeated by Hispala's speech to Aebutius: *pudicitiam famam spem uitamque tuam perditum ire hoc facto properat* (in this way, [your stepfather] is in a hurry to destroy your virtue, your reputation, your prospects, and your life, 39.10.4).[37] Hispala here paints Bacchic initiation as a threat to morality (*pudicitiam*), social standing (*famam*), potential (*spem*), and survival (*uitam*).[38]

We have already seen this technique earlier, when the narrator's interpretation of the true nature of the noise of the Bacchic mysteries (a cover for illicit sexual acts and murder: *nulla uox quiritantium inter stupra et caedes exaudiri poterat,* 39.8.8, quoted above) is echoed by Hispala's advice to Aebutius (*ne uox quiritantis cum per uim stuprum inferatur exaudiri possit*, 39.10.7). This device intimately connects *stuprum*, *uis,* and murder. Hispala's own fear of the Bacchants' violence makes her reluctant to speak to Postumius and attests the truth of her narration. She confesses to the consul her fear that they would kill her by performing *sparagmos* (39.13.5). On the one hand, this statement conforms to Hispala's depiction of the mysteries as violent and murderous, spilling over and outside the context of cult practices, but on the other, it exposes an element of humor or naïveté, since she appears unable to distinguish between elements of the cult known from literature and actual

happenings in the mysteries. This instance of subtle patronizing humor in the characterization of Hispala calls into question her claim of firsthand knowledge regarding the mysteries and thus undermines her authority.

Alongside *uis*, the use of the term *corruptela* promotes the narrative claim that the mysteries are an agent for all kinds of corruption.[39] As in the case of *uis*, the narrator initially mentions it in the episode's introduction (39.8.6 and 39.9.4), while it is subsequently echoed by Hispala in her speech to Postumius (39.10.6).[40] The narrator uses the term *corruptela* to denote either the general state of moral corruption in Aebutius' household or specifically the plotting of his death so that the stepfather would not be held accountable for mismanaging his inheritance (*uitricus, quia tutelam ita gesserat ut rationem reddere non posset, aut tolli pupillum aut obnoxium sibi uinculo aliquo fieri cupiebat*, 39.9.3 [the stepfather, because he had managed his guardianship in such a way as to be unable to give an accounting, wished that his ward either be eliminated or be bound to them by some tie]). *Corruptela* not only refers to a deficient moral compass but also threatens Aebutius' legal and physical existence. In this instance, Livy's use of *corruptela* equates moral and physical death.

Postumius' speech echoes the words of the narrator and Hispala, but in doing so causes a mirroring between the practices of the state and of the Bacchants. The obstacle presented by the mysteries to the proper function of the legal system and to healthy social relations is in the forefront of the Senate's decision to prosecute and punish the guilty by death: *qui stupris aut caedibus uiolati erant, qui falsis testimoniis, signis adulterinis, subiectione testamentorum, fraudibus aliis contaminati, eos capitali poena adficiebant* (they inflicted capital punishment upon those who were defiled by debauchery or murder, who were polluted by false testimony, forged seals, substitution of wills, or other frauds, 39.18.4). Livy connects the people who were forcibly submitted to *stuprum* with transgression of social and legal boundaries and with a proclivity for violence, culminating in murder (*caedes*). Notice the use of the verbs: the passive forms (*uiolati*, *contaminati*) normally convey lack of agency; in this case, however, the citizens' loss of an acceptable social identity determines their guilt and justifies the state's violent punishment. According to the state's logic, their death is necessary because the violence they have suffered works as an incitement to commit further violent acts. Therefore it needs to be eliminated through the use of state-sanctioned violence.

The state's reaction to Postumius' speech spreads terror to the city and the whole of Italy (*magnus terror urbe tota fuit, nec moenibus se tantum urbis*

aut finibus Romanis continuit, sed passim per totam Italiam (there was great terror throughout the city, nor was it just contained within the walls and borders of Rome but everywhere throughout Italy, 39.17.4). The narrator adds that more than seven thousand men and women were involved in the cult and were affected by the state's measures. Such a large number of targeted individuals belies an atmosphere of chaos similar to that of civil war: informers were paid to give names to the authorities; some tried to escape but were eventually arrested; others committed suicide; many stood trial. Numerous people were probably successful in escaping, because Livy mentions that Rome was emptied (*solitudo*, 39.18.2) and the state was forced to look for them and conduct trials in venues outside the city (39.18.3–4). As we have seen, the state's reaction to those it found guilty of *stuprum* and *caedes* was to inflict the death penalty, while women were given over to the *patria potestas* for punishment.[41] Livy makes an almost casual statement about the extent of the violence used: *plures necati quam in uincula coniecti sunt. Magna uis in utraque causa uirorum mulierumque fuit* (more were killed than were thrown in prison. There were great numbers of men and women in each case, 39.18.5). Nevertheless, the statement betrays a certain uneasiness about the extent of this violence.

Viewed in this light, the state's violence emerges as particularly problematic. Is seven thousand cult followers a number to be believed? Is the state's reaction commensurate to the threat? If yes, why wasn't the cult completely eradicated? Instead there were provisions for the continuance of its controlled practice.[42] Although it may be not safe to assume that these numbers reflect a reality,[43] they still display an ideological view of reality and thus constitute a measure by which we can gauge the extent of non-state-sanctioned practices in the population of Rome and Italy.

If, on the other hand, the state's response was an overreaction, the problem presented by the mysteries was one of sexual politics, and the state's violence may have reflected a disconnect between public practice and state morals. That is, the alignment that is so carefully constructed between the narrator, Hispala, Aebutius, and Postumius is negated by the violence the state exercises. Accordingly, there seems to have been greater social acceptance or at least tolerance of the mysteries and the practices occurring therein than Livy's narrative suggests. The narrative's uniform, unquestioning view of sexual and religious practices, which privileges the dominant male morality, is exposed as a construction, because it seeks to oppress alternative modes

of religious and sexual expression.[44] Put differently, Postumius' casting of the rites as "other" belies their status as Roman in the public's consciousness.

In conclusion, Livy's Bacchanalian narrative is useful to our understanding of perceptions of women's role in religion and ritual in several important ways. First, the narrative presents Roman notions on the role of gender that endure long after Livy's own time and can help us gauge the backdrop against which various other authors cast their own depictions of women's religious activities and experiences. Second, Livy provides us with an ideological narrative that seeks to smooth over any difficulties arising from religious activity not controlled by the state. As a result, by examining the narrative elements that cast Bacchic mysteries as foreign, feminine, feminizing, and uncivilized, we can detect the ideological thrust of Livy's episode and argue that it conceals a wider acceptance of the mysteries. (To be sure, Livy's ideologically charged narrative denigrates women as religious agents by presenting them as using their power to feminize young men and jeopardize their moral, sexual, and social trajectory into male citizenship.) Livy's text cannot tell us whether the homoerotic practices that are so castigated by the narrator and the other characters were actually embraced by the cult. Still, his tale of the events confirms that women-controlled rituals enjoyed wide acceptance. By extension, the mysteries' purported tolerance of alternative modes of sexual expression suggests the same tolerance on the part of those who either participated in the cult or accepted its religious legitimacy. Livy's narrative shows that this tolerance was widespread enough to be deemed dangerous. The state's violent reaction illuminates the importance ascribed to Bacchic cult and to the women's religious role therein, as well as attitudes towards other socially marginalized groups. In the next chapter, we turn to poetic representations of Bacchic rites in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and we examine how the empowerment of women through maenadism reorganizes Roman norms regarding marriage, family, and justice.

Philomela's Bacchic Justice

Ritual Resistance and Abusive Authority in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 6

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the relation of Dionysiac behavior to family and marriage is widely discussed in both Greek and Roman literature. In his account of the story of Procne and Philomela, Ovid puts Bacchic motifs to work to illustrate the processes of the destruction of Tereus' family, which begins with the empowerment of his wife, Procne, and sister-in-law, Philomela, and culminates in the cooking and eating of his son, Itys. Side by side with the Dionysiac motifs, Ovid manipulates the motif of ritual distortion—wedding and sacrifice in particular. As we have seen repeatedly in this volume, both are familiar from Greek tragedy, which regularly depicts wedding rituals gone awry or imagines death rituals as weddings. Rites that belong to the realm of the family are used to explore issues pertaining to the social and political realms. In Roman thought, familial ties are the cornerstone of social structures: the relationships among men of the state are regularly depicted as bonds of kinship, and political alliances are often cemented through marriage. At the same time, the leader of the state and his relationship to his people is typically cast in the image of the *paterfamilias* ruling over his family. Given this ideological framework, it is no surprise that Roman authors choose to appropriate the themes of marriage, maenadism, and sacrifice to explore problems in the Roman socio-political sphere.[1]

Distorted rites of marriage, maenadism, and sacrifice frame Ovid's story of Philomela, drawing attention to the perversion of family relations in the Thracian royal household. These motifs signify the empowerment of the women within this household and trace their transformation from victims to aggressors. The narrative puts in sharp relief the vicious retribution that abusive power may generate, thus perpetuating a cycle of violence that can destroy the most fundamental social (and by extension political) structures. While in Livy's narrative the state's intervention corrects and controls the

women's transgressive behavior, in Ovid, the women act in response to the violent aggression of the representative of the state, Tereus. The tables are thus turned, and in Ovid the women act to protect the innocent from the state's tyrannical rule.

The episode's famous story dates as early as Hesiod (*W&D* 568, fr. 312MW), and Homer's *Odyssey* (19.518–23).[2] Tereus, the king of Thrace, marries Procne, daughter of Pandion of Athens. Desiring to see her sister, Philomela, Procne asks her husband to go to Athens and bring her sister to Thrace for a visit. While on the road, Tereus rapes Philomela, and when she threatens to reveal to Procne what happened, Tereus cuts off her tongue, rapes her again repeatedly, and hides her in a shack in the woods. When he returns home, he tells Procne that Philomela is dead. Philomela, meanwhile, weaves a robe depicting her brutal rape and mutilation by her brother-in-law, which, thanks to a faithful female attendant, is delivered to Procne. Upon receiving this news, Procne goes to the shack where Philomela was hidden and frees her sister, and together they plot their revenge on Tereus, which involves the killing of their son, Itys. The two women cut up the boy's body and offer it as a meal to Tereus. When Tereus realizes what happened, he is transformed into a hoopoe, whereas Procne and Philomela become birds.

In this story of crime and revenge, the gods' absence is a stark one.[3] As perhaps befits a godless world, ritual perversion figures prominently in the opening scene of the episode, which features a detailed description of the wedding ceremony of Tereus and Procne:

> non pronuba Iuno,
> non Hymenaeus adest, non illi Gratia lecto;
> Eumenides tenuere faces de funere raptas,
> Eumenides strauere torum, tectoque profanus
> incubuit bubo thalamique in culmine sedit. (6.428–32)

> Neither Juno as matron of honor,
> nor Hymen, nor the Graces were present at that wedding:
> the Furies held torches snatched from a funeral,
> the Furies made the bed, and an ominous owl settled in
> their house and sat on the roof of their bedroom.

The deities that regularly sanction marriage are replaced by Furies holding funeral torches, a disturbing exchange that sets the tone for the following

narrative. Here Ovid deploys the motif of marriage to death differently from Greek tragedy: death does not await the bride, but the groom. The perverted nature of Procne's and Tereus' wedding ceremony indicates the perversion of the family bonds that it creates.[4] In the narrative, Tereus' lust for Philomela is described primarily as confusing and distorting family ties. This outcome is foreshadowed in the description of Tereus' sexual fantasies (*quotiens amplectitur illa parentem,/ esse parens uellet (neque enim minus impius esset!)* [whenever she embraces her father, he wants to be her father (nor would he be less sinful!)], 6.481–82) and made explicit by Philomela in her powerful speech to Tereus after her rape: *omnia turbasti; paelex ego facta sororis, / tu geminus coniunx,* 6.537–38 (you've confused everything; I have become the rival of my sister—you a husband to two women].[5] Elements of defiled wedding rites also appear in the scene where Pandion entrusts Philomela to Tereus by joining their right hands (6.506–07), thus evoking the *dextrarum iunctio*.[6] This gesture, normally expressing *fides* between husband and wife (Pavlock 1991: 35), ironically underscores Tereus' violation of the sanctity of his marriage to Procne and of Philomela's virginal body.

Family relations in the episode also function as a metonymy for political relations. The hand of Procne comes as a reward for Tereus' military aid to Athens (6.424–25) and fixes the alliance between the two men and their two kingdoms. Pandion thus neutralizes the barbarian threat (*barbara . . . agmina*, 6.423) by aligning himself with the barbarian king Tereus. But the antagonism between Athens and Thrace, Greek and barbarian, surfaces in Tereus' jealousy of Pandion as Philomela embraces him, which may thus be taken to symbolize Tereus' desire to control Athens (Joplin 1984: 32–33). As a result, the perversion of ritual expresses the perversion of family relations, which in turn stand for the perversion of political relations and institutions.[7]

Philomela assumes a surprising position for a rape victim: her sense of shame does not silence her but—quite the contrary—she threatens Tereus with exposure and punishment.[8] As one would expect, Philomela mourns the loss of her virginity;[9] yet during this lamentation she also demands justice and proclaims how she will obtain it. The narrator makes the connection between lament and empowerment explicit by comparing Philomela to a mourner:

> mox ubi mens rediit, passos laniata capillos,
> lugenti similis, caesis plangore lacertis,[10]
> intendens palmas . . .
> ait . . . (6.531–34)

> When she soon comes to her senses, she tears up her flowing locks like a mourner, scratches her arms with beatings, and, with her hands outstretched, . . . she says . . .

The wounds resulting from the violence of Tereus on Philomela's body are now reinterpreted as mourning attire (*laniata, caesis . . . lacertis*). The woman's transformation into a mourner comes after she has regained her senses from the shock (*ubi mens rediit*), an unusual state in narratives of lament, which usually describe the mourner's mental condition as compromised.[11] Philomela, by contrast, is rational when she adopts the appearance and the affect of the mourner, both of which precede her address to Tereus. In her speech, she uses a conventional theme in laments, namely the wish to join the deceased in death (see chapter 6). Similarly, Philomela asks Tereus to kill her and wishes that he had killed her before raping her (*quin animam hanc . . . / eripis? atque utinam fecisses ante nefandos / concubitus*, 6.539–41). The placement of *concubitus* with enjambment and a pause emphasizes that rape is an act worse than death. Yet the comparison between death and rape casts the two as analogous and creates a connection that enables Philomela's transformation into a mourner.

Philomela's assumption of the role of mourner also signals her speech as particularly powerful: as we saw earlier, she threatens Tereus in no uncertain terms that she will make his crimes public and that her story will reach the civilized world or at least the world of nature. In the latter statement, *si siluis clausa tenebor, / implebo siluas et conscia saxa mouebo* (if I am kept shut up in the woods, I will fill the woods with my voice and will move the rocks to sympathy, 6.546–47), the rocks are invoked as *conscia*, that is, as possessing human consciousness.[12] This transformation of the rocks from inanimate to animate is similar to Orpheus' accomplishment in *Met*. 11.1–2. As we have seen, in that episode, lament is linked to speech that can challenge those with more power (chapter 7:92–102). Tereus' violent reaction may demonstrate not only his brutality but also his fear at Philomela's newfound power.[13]

The turning point of the narrative, the empowerment of Procne to exact revenge, with its fatal consequences for her household, occurs within the context of Bacchic ritual. Procne, under the pretext of participating in an all-female Bacchic cult, goes to the shack where Tereus has hidden her raped sister, breaks open the door, seizes Philomela, dresses her in Bacchic clothing, and brings her home (6.590–600). The narrative lingers at the moment of Procne's assumption of Bacchic ritual attire, indicating that her dress is

commensurate with negation of civilized values (6.592–93). To be sure, the narrator states that Procne's participation in the rites is a sham and that the motive for her actions is frenzy and anger (6.595–96).[14] Yet these emotions are precisely the typical effects of Bacchic possession. The women also acquire physical powers through their ritual performance: Procne is depicted as possessing the strength to break down the doors of the shack (*refringit*, 6.597) and as employing violence in order to remove her sister from captivity (*rapit*, 6.598; *trahens*, 6.600).[15] In addition, the alliteration and assonance in the phrase describing Procne's movements (*rapit raptaeque*, 6.598) is particularly poignant, with the same verb used to signal both Philomela's rescue and her current state as *rapta*, rendered so by Tereus' brutality.[16]

Furthermore, when Procne dons Bacchic accoutrements, she is invested with a power that allows her to negate her marriage to Tereus. In dressing Philomela in Bacchic clothing and hiding her secretly inside her house, Procne transfers her loyalties from her husband and son back to her natal family. Both women move from enclosure to wilderness and back to the domestic interior (Segal 1994: 271). But their return to the house via the forest signals a renewal of their bond, which necessitates aggression against Tereus. Since Bacchic ritual frenzy is also synonymous with the killing of kin, and of sons in particular, the sisters' disguise prefigures the subsequent murder of Itys (see also Segal 1994: 270–71). Their collusion is made possible through the performance of a rite that aids and abets the ultimate destruction of Tereus' household.[17]

The killing of Itys is presented as a result of the confusion of family relations brought about by Tereus' act of rape. Bacchic activity facilitates Procne's renewed bondedness with her sister, and Itys becomes a target because he is perceived as resembling his father (*a! quam/es similis patri,* 6.621–22). When the boy speaks to his mother, she contrasts his ability to speak with her sister's muteness (6.631–32). Procne considers who merits her loyalty: *cui sis nupta uide, Pandione nata, marito:/degeneras; scelus est pietas in coniuge Terei*, 634–35 (see what kind of husband you married, daughter of Pandion: you dishonor [your father]; for the wife of Tereus, loyalty is a crime).[18] But when she weighs her options, it becomes obvious that she has already made her choice: even as she acknowledges her status as Tereus' wife, she addresses herself as daughter of Pandion, an identification registered in the text with the juxtaposition of *nata* and *marito*.

Critics have long noted that Agave's killing of Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae* bears the marks of a sacrifice (Seaford 1994: 311–18). In Ovid, too, the

description of Itys' killing resembles the preparation for a sacrificial meal (6.640–46). Philomela's cutting of the boy's neck looks back to the scene of the cutting of her tongue by Tereus (6.553–57), which is rife with sacrificial symbolism (Pavlock 1991: 39; 44). The boy's killing also implies Bacchic *sparagmos*, his limbs taken apart and roasted while he is still alive (Pavlock 1991: 44). Procne serves Tereus his son's flesh, an act that constitutes a horrific reversal of the fertility ritual she purports to be offering.[19] The killing of Itys in the deep recesses of the house (*penetralia*, 6.646) indicates the destruction of Tereus' *domus* from within. The hidden domestic space where the atrocious sacrifice of Itys takes place looks back to the darkness of the night that hosted the Bacchic rites and Philomela's liberation (6.588–90, where *nox* is repeated three times), as well as to the "dark earth" on which Philomela's severed tongue quivered like a snake (6.558–59).[20]

Woman, darkness, and the earth are all linked to the presence of Furies (Richlin 1992a: 164), who thus frame the story with the theme of crime and retribution: Furies presided over the wedding of Tereus and Procne, while Philomela resembles a Fury with her hair spattered with gore as she hurls the bloody head of Itys to Tereus (*sparsis furiali caede capillis*, 6.657). Procne too was Furylike when she hastened to her sister's rescue dressed as a Bacchant (*furialia accipit arma*, 6.591; *terribilis Procne furiisque agitata*, 6.595; Segal 1994: 275). Furies are evoked by Tereus to avenge the death of his son (6.661–62). Bacchic ritual lends strength to the wronged woman, who exacts her revenge by forfeiting her role as mother and wife. The ritual perversion framing both the beginning of the episode (the wedding of Procne and Tereus) and the end (the sacrifice of Itys) draws attention to the distortion of family relations, while maenadism is the catalyst that propels the women to destructive action.

As so often in Roman literature, Ovid's problematization of family relations expresses anxieties about the stability of the state. Tereus, described as *tyrannus* in the narrative (6.549, 581), abuses his power as *paterfamilias* and defiles family bonds and loyalties. In the *Metamorphoses*, the term *tyrannus* is synonymous with authoritarianism and ruthlessness (Pavlock 1991: 34). Ovid stresses the political nature of Tereus' and Procne's union as an exchange for military assistance in times of war (6.426–28). The portrayal of Tereus as a tyrant with utter disregard for social institutions also suggests that abusive authority may lead to the breakdown of the values on which society rests (Pavlock 1991: 45). The empowerment of Procne and Philomela and their ultimate revenge poignantly dramatize the distortion of social (and by

extension political) relations as well as the destruction of the social and political fabric, while simultaneously affirming their bondedness through their shared familial and ritual identities.

As the *Metamorphoses* were written in the aftermath of almost a century of civil wars and the rise of the new order of the *princeps,* such anxieties appear reasonable and justified. Tereus' destruction of the integrity of the family and the absence of the divine express a larger breakdown in the social, political, and religious order. The normal avenues for dispensing justice are either thwarted or corrupted, and thus a real concern about authority and power emerges. Alternatively, the women's empowerment through their ritual roles of mourners or Bacchants does not offer a viable solution to the problem, since Tereus' brutal act is succeeded by that perpetrated by the women. Metamorphosis presents a temporary solution to these impasses, but the questions persist. Following in the footsteps of Ovid, Valerius, and Statius also engage with many of the same themes in their portrayal of Hypsipyle, painting an equally complex image of female Bacchic agency, but this time presenting it as an alternative to an increasingly vulnerable male authority.

Hypsipyle's Bacchic *Pietas*

Ritual, Exemplarity, and Gender in Valerius and Statius

Hypsipyle is a princess living on the remote island of Lemnos. The men of Lemnos have gone on a military expedition to neighboring Thrace, and the women, angry at their abandonment, decide to kill their husbands upon their return. A massacre ensues. Hypsipyle is the only one that does not participate but decides to save her father, King Thoas, from slaughter. She hides him and eventually brings him to safety by helping him escape from the island. Hypsipyle subsequently becomes queen. A little while later, Jason and the Argonauts make a stop at the island on their way to retrieve the Golden Fleece. Hypsipyle falls in love with Jason, and the women have children with the other Argonauts, thus saving the population of Lemnos from extinction. The Argonauts eventually leave the island to continue with their quest. The first extant version of the story is in the Hellenistic epic *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes. Euripides also wrote a tragedy titled *Hypsipyle*, from which only fragments survive, some of them quite substantial.

Hypsipyle is a fascinating character in both Valerius' *Argonautica* (2.1–427) and Statius' *Thebaid* (5.1–498).[1] Her portrayal in the two epics has been analyzed in terms of the intertextual debt to Vergil's Dido (Vessey 1985, Nugent 1996, Hershkowitz 1998: 136–46), as a carefully constructed "other" (in Statius: Keith 2000, Augoustakis 2010), and as a Romanized *exemplum* of heroic female behavior (in Valerius: Aricò 1991, Hershkowitz 1998: 136–46; in Statius: Ganiban 2007: 71–95).

Scholars have also noted inconsistencies in Hypsipyle's depiction. Vessey (1985: 337) argues that her actions pose questions of verisimilitude, constituting a weakness in Valerius' storytelling, whereas Nugent (1996) analyzes Statius' episode from the lens of narrative dynamics and intertextuality to problematize Statius' own relationship with "father" Vergil. While all of these approaches have yielded valuable insights, I argue that an examination

of Hypsipyle's ritual actions can further our understanding of her representation as an agent whose power sheds light on Roman ideas vis-à-vis the construction of male and female genders in the Flavian period. More specifically, I focus on the Bacchic character of Hypsipyle's actions in both authors, as well as on the rituals Hypsipyle engages in during her father's rescue. Although both Valerius and Statius make use of the maenadism motif in representng Hypsipyle, they choose very different paths in their rendition of her religious action.[2]

Valerius and Statius dwell on the Lemnian massacre much more than their Greek original, Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* (1.609–26). To be sure, the temptation to use Hypsipyle as a means to rewrite Vergil's Dido must have been too great to resist. In their portrayal of Hypsipyle's fortunes, both authors employ Bacchic imagery, which actually originates with Apollonius (1.633–38) and fits neatly with Vergil's casting of Dido as a Bacchant (*A*. 4.300–04). If we examine the rituals which women engage in the two epics, we see that Valerius' Lemnian women resemble the Latin mothers of *Aeneid* 7, whereas Statius describes Hypsipyle's mock burial of her father by mobilizing Dido's magic ritual in *Aeneid* 4.

The ritual context in both cases, however, has been significantly altered from their intertextual counterparts. Valerius' Bacchic ritual involves the cross-dressing of Thoas, whereas Statius disturbingly conflates magic and burial rites. In both texts, the rituals are associated with female action and enable Hypsipyle's success. But they also raise questions regarding the agency that Hypsipyle assumes. On the one hand, her use and abuse of ritual point to her excessive power, which both authors appear to condemn. On the other hand, the characterization of her power as excessive is undercut by her portrayal as a female *exemplum* of *pietas* and as a victimized "other." In this regard, we can see that Hypsipyle's role is similar to that of Hispala in Livy's Bacchanalian narrative—that is, as aligned with the interests of the state.

Valerius' Hypsipyle

Lemnian Maenads

Valerius' narrative of the Lemnian women's massacre and Hypsipyle's subsequent rescue of Thoas shows Venus herself assuming the role of a Fury and inflicting madness on the women.[3] She also usurps the rites of Bacchus and uses them as a means for destruction, while Bacchus himself is marginalized. The episode displays a profound engagement with Vergil's *Aeneid*, where women's collective action often leads to disaster for men in general

and for Aeneas' mission in particular.[4] Hypsipyle as an *exemplum* of *pietas* is meant to recall Aeneas rescuing his father from burning Troy (*A*. 2.707–34).[5] Yet Hypsipyle's *pietas* is complicated by Valerius' casting of her actions as the result of maenadic frenzy, a frenzy she shares with the other Lemnian women, who had just committed the atrocious massacre of their husbands and children.[6] It is instructive to see how these images have been deployed and redeployed through the medium of allusion in order to cast the women's actions as at once powerful and dangerous.

The Bacchic elements we encounter in Hypsipyle's portrait probably originate in Apollonius' *Argonautica*. Apollonius' portrayal of the Lemnian women as Bacchants may itself have been inspired by Euripides' *Bacchae*, where the women's maenadic frenzy turns against the community and contrasts with the benign form of maenadic cult exhibited by the play's chorus. Apollonius' description of the Lemnian women as Bacchants occurs at the moment of their encounter with the Argonauts (AR 1.627–39). Apollonius' Bacchic simile emphasizes that the women have abandoned their traditional roles as wives and mothers and have taken up the men's agricultural tasks, as well as their weapons (AR 1.627–28). Although we are told that their fear of the Thracians is great, the simile describing the women emphasizes their wild and dangerous potential (Θυάσιν ὠμοβόροις ἴκελαι [like flesh-eating maenads], AR 1.636). The word ὠμοβόροις refers to the practice of *sparagmos* and *omophagia*, whereby maenads tear apart live animals and eat them raw.[7] Apollonius' use of this word indicates the opposite of what his simile at first glance seeks to emphasize. The Lemnian women are not fearful of but menacing to men. Through this simile, the text conveys that the women's actions are subject to different interpretations. On the one hand, even though the women have assumed men's weapons (χάλκειά τε δύνειν / τεύχεα [donning bronze armor], AR 1.627–28), they do not quite constitute full-fledged warriors and still have to worry about the threat of newcomers to their island. On the other, the image of them as flesh-eating Bacchants suggests that they can be very harmful to men (as they have been). Apollonius' simile communicates that the women are dangerous to the Argonauts, while in the main narrative he points to their fear, which prompts them to receive the protection that the Argonauts are in a position to offer.[8]

Valerius puts Apollonius' simile to work as a recurrent motif in his expanded version of the massacre of the Lemnian men. The women act as crazed Bacchant Furies[9] practicing *sparagmos* and ruthlessly killing their husbands and children.[10] Valerius' extended use of maenadism owes much

to both Apollonius and Vergil. Yet Valerius' portrayal of women's Bacchic behavior serves to highlight their madness and the devastation their actions bring. By mobilizing Vergil's Bacchic intertext, Valerius expands on an episode that the Greek poet only treats briefly, using Apollonius' ambiguous treatment of the women's actions and transferring it onto his Hypsipyle. Valerius makes Hypsipyle's actions mirror that of the women but serve *pietas*. Bacchic action leads to female empowerment, which is at once destructive and beneficial.

The potentially dangerous nature of Hypsipyle's Bacchic engagement is conveyed through military language, commonly used in Bacchic narratives and by no means unique to Valerius: *illa pias armata manus*, 249 (her pious hands armed).[11] Later on, Hypsipyle becomes a fully-fledged maenad:

> ipsa sinus hederisque ligat famularibus artus
> pampineamque quatit uentosis ictibus hastam,
> respiciens teneat uirides uelatus habenas
> ut pater, <e> niuea tumeant ut cornua mitra
> et sacer ut Bacchum referat scyphus. (2.268–72)
>
> She herself wraps Bacchic ivy around her breast and limbs and brandishes the vine-leaved spear with blows in the air, looking back to see whether her father, clothed, holds the leafy reins, his horns bulge from his snow-white cap, and the sacred cup brings Bacchus to mind.

Hypsipyle's Bacchic attire includes the Bacchic wand, called here a spear (*hasta*).[12] The infusion of military language reflects the aggressive nature of Dionysiac behavior (*pampineamque quatit uentosis ictibus hastam*, 2.269). At the conclusion of Hypsipyle's maenadic speech, the narrator comments that the god himself renders her fearsome (*facit ipse uerendam*, 2.277) and thus invests her with supernatural traits. Such a quality recalls the characteristics of the other Lemnian women, who are consistently portrayed as maenad-Furies.[13] In instigating the massacre, Venus is also portrayed as an arch-Fury,[14] transforming the Lemnian women's stature and making their voices sound louder (*adeo ingentes inimica uideri / diua dabat, notaque sonat uox coniuge maior* [so huge did the hostile goddess make (the women) seem and the familiar voice sounds louder than their wife's], 2.225–26). In both cases, the divine aids the women's empowerment, although with different aims. Venus seeks to destroy the men, whereas Bacchus empowers Hypsipyle to

save her father. This mirrored influence renders Hypsipyle's actions more disturbing than they may initially appear.

Hypsipyle's potential aggressiveness is enhanced by further mirroring between her portrait and that of the Lemnian women. In the massacre, we witness a marked conflation of Bacchic and military imagery. The use of Fama as an instrument of madness and destruction (2.115–21) mobilizes the intertextual canvas of Vergil's *Aeneid* (4.173–97), where Fama is described as moving in a state of Bacchic frenzy (*bacchatur*, 4.666).[15] The Lemnian women collectively abandon their homes and gather in the open air, in nature (VF 2.170–75; Spaltenstein 2002: 354), just as maenads temporarily negate their roles as civilized beings and caretakers of the household to act out their aggression in the realm of nature. The women's collective action is stressed repeatedly (*adglomerant*, 171; *condensae*, 172), and Venus' role as leader in this "Bacchic" action is emphasized (*has inter medias*, 174).[16] In her speech to the women, Venus, disguised as the Lemnian Dryope, also continues the Bacchic metaphor and the women follow along a maenadic path:

> "non prius ense manus raptoque armabimus igne
> dumque silent ducuntque nova cum coniuge somnos,
> magnum aliquid spirabit amor?" tunc ignea torquens
> lumina praecipites excussit ab ubere natos.
> ilicet arrectae mentes euictaque matrum
> corda sacer Veneris gemitus rapit. aequora cunctae
> prospiciunt simulantque choros delubraque festa
> fronde tegunt laetaeque uiris uenientibus adsunt.
> iamque domos mensasque petunt. (2.182–90)

> "Shall we not rather arm our hands with swords and firebrands, and while they are resting and sleeping with their new wives, won't our love inspire something great?" Then rolling her blazing eyes, she throws her sons headlong from her breast. At once their [the women's] minds are roused, and the divine lamentations of Venus seize the hearts of the mothers, won over. They all look out to the sea, feign dances, cover the shrines with festive foliage, and, joyful, they go to meet their arriving husbands. And now they seek their houses and their dinner tables.

Venus' sword and burning brands resemble the *thyrsi*, the Bacchic wands which are often associated with military weapons. Dryope's/Venus' own

madness, appropriate in the leader of a Bacchic chorus, is noted in language that does not fail to evoke Amata's (and Dido's) maenadic frenzy in the *Aeneid* (*ignea torquens / lumina* echoes Amata's *sanguineam torquens aciem*, *A*. 7.399).[17] The women's aggression now turns against their children (*praecipites excussit ab ubere natos*), another typical motif in narratives depicting maenadism, where women are described as either abandoning children or performing kidnapping, *sparagmos* (as in the case of Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae*), or even murder (as in the case of Procne and Itys in Ovid's *Met*. 6; see chapter 11:144–45). Dryope's tossing of her babies implicitly foreshadows the eventual killing of the male children, although it is not explicitly mentioned in the ensuing narrative. Moreover, as in *Aeneid* 7, the women's attack takes a ritual guise, a Bacchic one in particular, as they engage in dancing and deck the temples with festal garlands (188–89). Finally, the women appear to have concluded their "Bacchic" performance in its benign form, returning to their homes and feasting tables (*domos mensasque petunt*) after they had negated their roles as wives and mothers within the context of ritual. Yet in this instance, the women's return is part of their continuing distortion of maenadism and only serves to create the illusion of normalcy so as to make their attack more effective.

The portrayal of Venus as Amata continues through a fusion of elements that cast her at once as Bacchant, Fury, and warrior. Like Amata (*ipsa inter medias flagrantem feruida pinum / sustinet*, *A*. 7.397–98), she is brandishing a torch (*quassans undantem turbine pinum*, 2.196). The word *pinus* refers to the Bacchic wand, but also to the wedding and funeral torch (in this case of a wedding turned into a funeral). The women use this polyvalent instrument to kill their husbands and set fire to their homes, thus destroying their households both symbolically and literally (*diras aliae ad fastigia taedas / iniciunt adduntque domos*, 2.235–36).[18] The divine presence in this destruction comprises Furies and other deities associated with war.[19] The vocabulary used to recount the women's actions is similarly speckled with language borrowed from battle narratives: the decapitated husbands' bodies roll down from the beds (*seque toris misero luctamine trunci / deuoluunt*, 2.234–35) in the manner of other famous epic war victims, such as Priam (in *A*. 2.557–58) and Pompey (in Lucan *BC* 8.674, 698, 722).

The maenadic element persists as well: the women perform *sparagmos* (*prensosque toris mactatque trahitque / femineum genus*, 2.230–31),[20] which once again links Bacchic behavior with the destruction of marriage, as their violence is directed against men sleeping in their beds, symbolizing both

their unsuspecting helplessness and their destroyed marriage. The women's transgression is cast as a perversion of women's rituals, Bacchic, wedding, and funeral/lamentation, followed by their transgression of their social roles as wives and mothers and their transformation into warriors. The women's destructive agency is then cast as distortion of both ritual and social norms. Hypsipyle's "Bacchic mirroring" with the other Lemnian women then highlights her agency,[21] but also underscores its destabilizing and destructive potential.

Hypsipyle's Rescue of Thoas

Hypsipyle's rescue of Thoas casts her as a subject whose agency is enabled by a ritual task, even as her actions privilege her bondedness with her father over her ties to the women of her community. By contrast, Thoas is portrayed as passive and feminized. On the night of the massacre, Hypsipyle covers her father with some type of cloth[22] (*obnubitque caput*, 2.254) and brings him to a nearby shrine of Bacchus, who happens to be her grandfather. (Thoas is the son of Bacchus and Ariadne. In this she acts almost within the context of ancestor worship.) In the morning, she disguises her father as a statue of Bacchus, performs a procession with the statue, as is done in Dionysiac celebrations (Pausanias 1.38.8), taking him away from the city to a forest (*siluis*, 2.280). Hypsipyle herself is dressed as a maenad and engages in maenadic rites while finding shelter for her father. Still, she fears for his life and, after what appears to be a few days, finds an abandoned ship whereby she whisks him to safety. Thoas eventually reaches Tauris and becomes king. Soon after, the cult of Diana at Tauris is transported to Aricia, and Thoas becomes the first priest of Diana's shrine there.[23]

Thoas is described as old and weak—certainly the antithesis of the powerful king—and contrasts sharply with his resourceful daughter (VF 2.253–55). He is silent (*tacitus*, 254), trembling (*pauidus*, 257), old (*senex*, 279), and troubled (*anxius*, 300). Hypsipyle has to support him so he doesn't fall, or perhaps as he is about to faint (*excipit artus*, 253).[24] The narrator attributes no action to Thoas but consistently describes him using passive participles (*receptus*, 258; *uelatus*, 270; *remotum*, 279).[25] In his inaction Thoas resembles the lifeless statue of the god and contrasts with Hypsipyle's decisiveness and initiative.

Valerius' account of Hypsipyle's religious activity during her father's rescue suggests a problematic gender-bending, as the roles of father and daughter are reversed. This reversal results in a feminization of Thoas that progressively develops, culminating in a ritual cross-dressing:

> tacita pauidum tunc sede locauit
> sub pedibus dextraque dei. latet ille receptus
> ueste sacra. uoces chorus[26] et trieterica reddunt
> aera sonum fixaeque fremunt in limine tigres.[27] (VF 2.257–60)
>
> Then she placed him trembling in the silent temple, below the feet and the right hand of the god; covered beneath the sacred robe he lies hidden; voices echo from the chorus and sounds from the triennial cymbals, while the immovable tigers at the threshold roar.

and a little later:

> serta patri iuuenisque comam uestesque Lyaei
> induit et medium curru locat aeraque circum
> tympanaque et plenas tacita formidine cistas. (VF 2.265–67)
>
> She dressed her father with garlands, youthful locks, and the robes of Dionysus, and placed him in the middle of the chariot and around him the cymbals and the drums, and the caskets full of secret awe.

Hypsipyle initially covers Thoas' head, thus concealing his identity, and rushes him to the temple of Bacchus. The use of the verb *rapit* to denote both her movement and her action suggests a type of violence associated with kidnapping and maenadic kidnapping in particular (compare Verg. *A.* 7.385–87).[28] Clothing is mentioned again when Thoas is hiding under the statue of Bacchus, covered by the statue's robe,[29] and once again appears successful in rendering Thoas invisible and suppressing his identity as both father and king. In addition, Hypsipyle puts a wig with long hair on him and dresses him in the robes of Dionysus under which he was hiding earlier (*serta patri iuuenisque comam uestesque Lyaei / induit*, 265–66).[30] Evoking the eternal youth of Bacchus, the wig transforms Thoas from helpless old man to youthful god. At the same time, Bacchus' long hair points to his ambiguous nature as both effeminate and masculine. Thoas thus shares in this ambiguity through the medium of dress.[31] Furthermore, a little later in the narrative (271), we are told that the king is wearing a *mitra*, a cap that both the god and his worshippers wear.[32] In Roman thought, the *mitra* is often associated with women or effeminate men (such as the followers of Cybele).[33] Servius' commentary on the *Aeneid* states that the *mitra* is an emblem of effeminacy,[34] while in Euripides' *Bacchae* (929) Pentheus wears a *mitra* in the context of

cross-dressing as a Bacchant.[35] The *mitra* that Thoas wears renders him at least as effeminate as the young Dionysus.

Moreover, Valerius' intertextual engagement with the fabric of Euripides' *Bacchae* and Vergil's *Aeneid* suggests that Thoas is feminized by his transformation. Hypsipyle's "kidnapping" of her father and his transport into the woods mobilizes, as we have seen, the episode of Amata's kidnapping of Lavinia in *Aeneid* 7. In Vergil, this kidnapping is also accompanied by a fake Bacchic rite on the part of Amata (7.385) and the Roman mothers (7.392–405). It also involves the dedication of the girl to Bacchus (7.389–90).[36] Similarly in Euripides' *Bacchae*, the scene of Pentheus' cross-dressing (821–45) recalls the basic elements of Thoas' disguise. Pentheus' transformation into a woman consists of putting on a robe (821, 833), a long-haired wig (831), and a *mitra* (833).[37] It also involves Pentheus' movement away from the city into the wild, just as Thoas is taken away from the city and into the woods. This rich intertextual layering renders Thoas analogous to a young woman, Lavinia, and a young man, Pentheus (who is dressed as a woman), suggesting that his disguise is a gender transformation.[38] Hypsipyle in turn is rendered analogous to Amata, a queen whose maenadism has disastrous results for her community, and Dionysus, the destructive god who takes cruel vengeance. Valerius' portrait of Hypsipyle's empowerment through her performance of Bacchic ritual and the subsequent feminization of Thoas undercuts her portrayal as a hero. Yet as we shall see in the next section, Valerius' engagement with Euripides helps qualify further the nature of Hypsipyle's agency.

The "Initiation" of Thoas

The reversal of gender roles in the story of Hypsipyle and Thoas is brought into sharper relief through Valerius' mobilization of the intertext of Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Tauris*. Valerius ends the story of Hypsipyle's rescue of Thoas with his flight to Tauris (2.300–05), a type of "Alexandrian footnote" that points to Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Tauris*.[39] In particular, Orestes' rescue by Iphigenia in Euripides' play shares numerous elements with that of Thoas and thus sheds light on Hypsipyle's agency in Valerius' narrative. Iphigeneia, like Hypsipyle, is the major agent for Orestes' and Pylades' escape, successfully tricking Thoas by using her authority as priestess of Artemis. In Euripides, Iphigeneia tells Thoas that the matricide Orestes has polluted the goddess's statue, which is now in need of purification. She proposes to take it to sea to wash it while taking the prisoners with her. Thoas agrees to her

requests but eventually finds out that she has escaped along with the prisoners. Iphigeneia successfully uses her status as priestess to control Thoas and the guards. In this she is very much like Hypsipyle, who assumes similar powers as priestess of Bacchus in order to rescue her father. Unlike Hypsipyle, whose description suggests that she too may be subject to the forces of irrationality that have engulfed the other women, Iphigeneia's behavior is presented as rational and calculating, devoid of any of the elements that typically accompany women's representations in positions of power.

Iphigeneia's ritual procession of the goddess's statue and the preparations for its purification in the sea (Eur. *IT* 1222–33) easily deceive her enemies, since such rites were common in ancient cult practice.[40] Iphigeneia appears to have with her at least three of Thoas' attendants (1208; Kyriakou 2006: 385), other temple servants, the captives (Eur. *IT* 1205–7, Kyriakou 2006: 384), robes for the goddess's statue, and other ritual accoutrements, such as lit torches and sacrificial animals (Kyriakou 2006: 388–89). Sacrifices are necessary for purification, since pollution from blood (such as Orestes' matricide) is commonly cleansed with blood sacrifice in Greek cult.[41]

Valerius' Hypsipyle similarly offers the need for purification as the reason for conducting a procession of Bacchus' statue:[42]

> linque o mihi caede madentem,
> Bacche, domum! sine foedatum te funere pontus
> expiet et referam lotos in templa dracones! (VF 2.274–76)
>
> Leave, Bacchus, for my sake, your house dripping with blood! Let the ocean cleanse your pollution from the killing and let me bring back to the temple your serpents purified!

Pollution is emphasized in Valerius' description of the men's slaughter, where the goddess herself (even though she has assumed the form of the Lemnian Dryope) is shown dripping with fresh blood (*taboque sinus perfusa recenti*, 2.212). The word Valerius employs, *tabes*, is associated with miasma.[43] Within this context, Hypsipyle's concern with purification makes a more than plausible excuse for orchestrating her father's rescue,[44] just as Iphigeneia uses the pollution from Orestes' matricide in order to achieve their escape from Tauris.

Hypsipyle performs the procession of the statue while engaging in maenadic activity, which is appropriate given that she assumes the role of priestess of Bacchus (2.265–67, quoted earlier). Unlike Iphigeneia's mock procession,

Hypsipyle's is performed without attendants. As we have seen, she places her father (disguised as the statue of Bacchus) on a chariot along with the necessary ritual accoutrements (*aera*, 260; *tympana*, *cistas,* 267) and proceeds with her maenadic dancing.

Hypsipyle's actions raise questions that have puzzled commentators. Certain inconsistencies in the description of her activities are hard to resolve because they are accompanied by textual uncertainties. Or is it rather that the textual problems have arisen because of these perceived inconsistencies and difficulties? Valerius seems to emphasize the extraordinary effectiveness of Hypsipyle's actions by including supernatural reactions to her agency.[45] Whether the reader imagines the temple echoing with the sound of cymbals and the tigers' statues coming to life,[46] or the author wants us to think of an epiphany that includes the god's chorus,[47] the point is that Hypsipyle succeeds in her mission, proves equally effective in performing the mock rituals she undertakes,[48] and assumes a similar priestly authority to that of Iphigeneia.[49]

Synonymous with the idea of mock purification is the concept of covering as a means of both deceiving and avoiding contact with pollution, which is at work in both texts. In Euripides, Iphigeneia asks that the captives' and Thoas' heads be covered (*IT* 1207, 1218).[50] By ordering this ritual gesture, Iphigeneia ensures the preservation of her authority and power over the male protagonists and thereby guarantees the success of her plan. Valerius uses the same motif in an even more transgressive fashion. Hypsipyle, too, will most likely wash the "statue" and the robes with which it is covered to expiate the pollution incurred by the entire Lemnian community due to the men's slaughter. The princess has ostensibly incurred pollution herself from the presumed slaughter of her father. Hypsipyle then, like Iphigeneia, uses the authority conferred upon her as the executor of the rite to help her father escape.

In view of the importance of Euripides' *IT* for Valerius' episode, the affinities between Orestes and Thoas become apparent. They are both in danger at the hands of their enemies and are rescued by a close female relative. In both cases, the rescue is achieved through the performance of a mock ritual purification. The use of ritual as a means to drive the plot is accompanied by additional symbolic meanings, because during their rescue, Euripides' Orestes and Valerius' Thoas undergo a transformation. The idea of sacrifice is central here, as are the attending concepts of substitution and compensation. For instance, in Euripides' *IT*, an animal is substituted for Iphigeneia as a

sacrificial victim, and she is transferred to Tauris. Upon her return to Greece, the rites of the Arkteia are instituted in Brauron as compensation for her near-sacrifice (Tzanetou 1999–2000: 202–203). Likewise, Orestes undergoes a near-sacrifice in Tauris but upon his escape and return to Greece, mock sacrificial rites are instituted at Halai Araphenides as compensation.[51]

In this light, Valerius' narrative renders Thoas a "feminine" figure. His transformation has important implications for Hypsipyle, who likewise assumes greater authority and by extension a more "masculine" role. The poet complicates the ritual pattern of initiation by infusing it with elements from maenadic rites. This type of conflation is also found in Euripides' *Bacchae*, where Pentheus' failed rite of passage is due to his *sparagmos* at the hands of his mother and aunts. His *sparagmos* is cast as a sacrifice, and as a failed initiation.[52] Although an elderly king, Thoas follows a similar pattern to that of the initiatory schema of Iphigeneia and Orestes: separation (from his house to the temple of Bacchus to the wild), transition (near-*sparagmos* / mock purification), and reintegration (Thoas in Tauris and Aricia). The principles of substitution and compensation are operative here, with the mock purification substituting his near-*sparagmos* at the hands of Hypsipyle and the compensation for this near-sacrifice through his performance of sacrificial rites in Tauris and Aricia.[53] Valerius' allusion to *IT* likens Thoas to a young virgin. He thus changes places with his daughter, who now assumes the authority of the state. Hypsipyle's pious motives justify the role reversal and endorse her actions.

Valerius' rich and complex narrative casts Hypsipyle's success in rescuing her father in positive terms.[54] While her maenadism could render her agency potentially dangerous and destructive, the intertextual contact with Iphigeneia as high priestess offers an alternative point of view, whereby female agency is justified and necessary. Hypsipyle's portrait presents a multidimensional and compelling female character whose engagement with ritual reveals her as acting for the benefit of social and political norms even as her methods defy them. Her beneficial authority is linked with the beginnings of Roman religion (through her connection with *rex nemorensis*), the continuation of Roman empire, and with Valerius' own poetic powers (2.242–46). The poet thus casts a young princess as a model Roman leader who can deal effectively with a deep crisis (*decus et patriae laus una ruentis*, 2.243).[55] Hypsipyle's contribution to the welfare of the state is similar to that of Livy's Hispala, who likewise acts to protect Rome from the destructive engagement of women with Bacchic rites. In order to draw broader conclusions regard-

ing the Flavian authors' engagement with the Lemnian princess, we should now turn our attention to Statius.

Statius' Hypsipyle: Maenadism, Burial, and Poetry

Statius' version of the Lemnian massacre and Hypsipyle's role therein is different from that of Valerius in few but important ways. In the *Thebaid*, the Lemnian men leave their wives to wage war in Thrace. The old matron Polyxo stirs the women to action so that they can exact revenge. The women swear an oath to kill their husbands upon their return. As in Valerius, Hypsipyle is the only woman who does not participate in the slaughter but instead hurries to rescue Thoas. As father and daughter are fleeing the city, Bacchus appears and reveals the dangers facing them ahead. He helps them escape into the woods, and Hypsipyle sends Thoas to safety in a raft. Hypsipyle then performs a fake burial for her father. The other Lemnian women subsequently make her queen, and they begin rebuilding their city. During that time, Jason and the Argonauts come to Lemnos. Hypsipyle has two sons with Jason, while the other women have children with the other Argonauts. The visitors eventually leave in pursuit of the Golden Fleece. Later the women discover the treachery of Hypsipyle, who is forced to flee Lemnos. She takes refuge in Nemea, where she becomes a slave, the nurse of the king's baby son, Opheltes. There, fifteen years later, she meets the Seven on their way to Thebes. As she is telling them her story, Opheltes is killed by a monstrous serpent.[56]

Statius utilizes a narrative rich in allusions to various authors, casting Hypsipyle's actions in maenadic terms. Both Vergil and Valerius are important in this regard, as are Euripides' *Hypsipyle* and Apollonius' *Argonautica* (Soerink 2014).[57] As in Valerius, some ambivalence characterizes Hypsipyle's behavior, although her actions eventually contrast sharply with the powerlessness of divinities and male authority. In addition, Hypsipyle's performance of burial rites for her father go hand in hand with her characterization as a maenad. In what follows, I argue that Statius's narrative both mobilizes a complex intertextual canvas and draws on the women's role in burials with the aim of focusing on the princess' agency and empowerment. The link between mortuary rites and maenadism is particularly important, as it is deployed again at the end of the epic with particular effect (see chapter 8: 107–9).

Hypsipyle's fake burial of Thoas (*Theb.* 5.313–19) includes many elements of funeral rites, a domain that, as we have seen, normally falls within the purview

of women (see also Vessey 1970: 47). Hypsipyle's rite, however, distorts proper ritual practice in two ways. First, it corrupts the notion of the cenotaph, that is a dedication of a tomb and performance of funeral rites in honor of a deceased individual whose body is lost. Hypsipyle misappropriates this idea, because the deceased she honors is very much alive. In addition, she builds a funeral pyre in the innermost part of her house, a primarily female space, away from her father's domain and power (*arcanis tecti in penetralibus*, 5.313). Having removed Thoas physically, her destruction of his royal symbols prefigures her eventual status as queen. Second, intertextual contact with Vergil's *Aeneid* further emphasizes the distortions in Hypsipyle's burial rite. The entire scene mobilizes in miniature form Dido's fake magic rite, which ostensibly aims at winning Aeneas back through the use of magic, but which eventually becomes the locus of her death.[58]

The mobilization of the intertext of Dido's magic is more significant than previous analyses of Hypsipyle have allowed. Dido resorts to magic as a result of a madness inflicted by Juno and Venus, a madness triggered from unrequited love, but which also owes much to the dark supernatural forces that oppose Aeneas' mission. Dido's madness is explicitly and memorably associated with Bacchic frenzy twice, at the moment when the queen first realizes that Aeneas' departure is imminent (*A*. 4.300–04) and later, when in her dreams she sees herself as Pentheus maddened by Bacchic frenzy (*A*. 4.469–70). Statius' use of Vergil is strategic, aiming to complicate his Hypsipyle in a way that is both similar to and different from that of Valerius. While Valerius explicitly cast his Hypsipyle as a maenad, Statius relies on Vergil's intertext to do the same thing. As a result, once the reader recalls the intertextual context of Dido's magic as shaping the narrative, the notion of madness, and of Bacchic madness in particular, becomes immediately important as a foil to the portrait of Hypsipyle.[59]

This representation of Hypsipyle as Dido invites an additional examination of Statius' use of the "window" or "two-tiered" allusion. By mobilizing Dido as an intertext, Statius also marshals the allusive contexts that Vergil uses in this portion of the narrative, especially Apollonius' *Argonautica* 3. Dido's magic rites in *Aeneid* 4 share much with Apollonius' descriptions of Medea's instructions to Jason (AR 3.1026–51) and Jason's execution of the magic rites which will prepare him to face Aeetes' challenges (AR 3.1191–224). The three passages share many elements: nocturnal setting, animal sacrifice, building a pyre, various mixed libations, including honey, and boughs of oak. The presence of Hecate is another common theme, complete with

howling hounds and shrieking nymphs (Verg. *A*. 4.476–521 and AR 3.1026–51; 3.1191–1224).[60] Making use of the "window" allusion, Statius points to Vergil's scene to achieve the full effect of the perversion and darkness emitted by Hypsipyle's rites. Thoas' burial is thus linked with the dark forces of magic, aligns Hypsipyle and her actions with these forces, and bestows on her great, if questionable, powers.[61]

Bacchic elements abound in the description of the Lemnian women's rising to action through the exhortation of Polyxo:[62]

> cum subito horrendas aeui matura Polyxo
> tollitur in furias thalamisque insueta relictis
> euolat. insano ueluti Teumesia Thyias
> rapta deo, cum sacra uocant Idaeaque suadet
> buxus et a summis auditus montibus Euhan:
> sic, erecta genas aciemque effusa trementi
> sanguine, desertam rabidis clamoribus urbem
> exagitat clausasque domos et limina pulsans
> concilium uocat; infelix comitatus eunti
> haerebant nati. (*Theb*. 5.90–99)

> When suddenly Polyxo, mature in years, is roused to a horrific frenzy and, abandoning her bedroom, rushes out against her habit. Just like a Teumesian Thyiad seized by the frenzied god, when the rites call, Ida's boxwood urges on, and Euhan is heard from the mountaintops: thus, with eyelids open wide and eyes shot with quivering blood, she rouses the deserted city with frenzied cries and, beating on closed doors and thresholds, calls for an assembly. Her sons were clinging to her as she went, unlucky companions.

Once again, Hypsipyle as a narrator acknowledges the kinship between Polyxo's actions and maenadism with a vivid simile. The kind of empowerment that enables Polyxo to transgress traditional gender boundaries is described as analogous to Bacchic behavior. The similarities are indeed numerous. Polyxo leaves her home, something she does not normally do (*insueta*), physically forces the other closed homes open (*clausasque domos et limina pulsans*), and calls an assembly (*concilium uocat*). Her Bacchic state affects her appearance, as her eyes are open wide (*erecta genas*) and bloodshot (*aciemque effusa trementi/sanguine*), and she has taken her children with her, an act reminiscent of the kidnapping that occurs in some instances of maenadism.[63] As a result, Polyxo negates her role as a wife, who is normally enclosed (or contained)

in the space of her *domus*, and as a mother, who is normally a protector of her children. Instead she embraces the malevolent aspects of maenadic aggressiveness that subsequently spill over to the rest of the Lemnian women.[64]

Like Polyxo, the other women transgress their social roles (*Theb.* 5.99–103). Their hasty, confused outing to the citadel of Pallas contrasts with other famous scenes of women's orderly processions to the temple of Pallas in Homer (*Il.* 6.297–311) or Vergil (*A.* 11.477–85).[65] In those instances, the women pray to the goddess to put a stop to the male aggression that causes the destruction of their homes. In this case, the women's "maenadic" frenzy reverses the usual objective of a feminine procession and supplication at the goddess's temple. The solemn procession is replaced by the confusion that dominates the women's gathering (*ordine nullo*), while their imminent aggression is signaled by Polyxo's drawing of a sword.[66] The women's belligerence reveals a deep and dangerous disorder in the community of Lemnos, as they negate their bonds with their husbands and children and thus permanently destroy the familial, social, and political fabric.

Bacchic images also accompany Hypsipyle, who is described in a state of mourning, a state appropriate to the events that have transpired and congruent with her social and familial role as a woman (5.316–18). Yet her messy hair and her holding of a bloody sword also evoke the image of Bacchants, especially since similar aggressive female behavior that crosses traditional gender boundaries has dominated the narrative up to this point. This cluster of associations between maenadism and burial looks forward to the women's burial rites at the end of the poem. In both cases, however, Hypsipyle and the women act within their familial bonds. Their ritual duties provide them with an opportunity to rise to action, but unlike the Lemnian women, their empowerment, though potentially threatening, ultimately serves their families and the state.[67]

The transgressive nature of Hypsipyle's agency may be illustrated by pressing further on the intertextual connections that deemphasize Thoas' status as king and rather cast him in the role of ephebe. Apollonius' *Argonautica* is an important intertext in this regard, since the Statian narrative of Hypsipyle's burial rites links Thoas to the figure of Jason. Scholars have noted that Jason's bathing in the river in the *Argonautica* (3.1202–04) can be seen as a rite of passage from an ephebic self to adult warrior.[68] Thoas' journey in the water is a similar kind or "baptism" or "rebirth" accompanied by a reversal of familial roles: Hypsipyle can be symbolically seen as a mother figure and Thoas as a child. The language in the passage supports this read-

ing: Hypsipyle encloses her father in a hollow bark (*curuo robore clausum*, *Theb.* 5.287). On one level, the hollow bark refers to a ship, but on another, it recalls images of pregnancy. Hard at work here is intertextual linkage to Vergil's *Aeneid* 2, particularly the Trojan horse episode, where rich imagery of pregnancy describes a wooden object enclosing live beings (e.g. 2.50–54; 237–38; 258–59).[69] Like Valerius, Statius thus represents Thoas as childlike.[70] By implication, Hypsipyle takes on Thoas' authority in a symbolic fashion even before she assumes the rule of Lemnos at the conclusion of her burial rite (5.324–25). Statius makes use of Valerius' motif of Thoas' depiction as feminized and disempowered, not through contact with Euripides' *IT*, but through allusion to Apollonius and Vergil. The poet shares Valerius' vision of Hypsipyle's power, which is conferred upon her through her ritual actions and devotion to *pietas*, but he employs a different allusive program to achieve the desired effect.

Bacchus' epiphany to Hypsipyle as she sets out to rescue her father is an important moment that contrasts the heroine's resourcefulness with the god's relative powerlessness. Euripides' *Hypsipyle* may be one of the intertexts for this episode in Statius.[71] The most recent editors of Euripides' fragments posit that the god appears at the end of the play as *deus ex machina*.[72] Bond (1963: 20) states that Dionysus probably instructs Euneus (Hypsipyle's son) to take her back to Lemnos and then go to Athens, where he and his family will provide sacred music to the city. Evidence suggests that the family of Euneidai was still active in Athens in this capacity in the middle of the fifth century BCE. The play thus provides an etiology for contemporary ritual practice, as is often the case in Greek tragedies, and links an Athenian family directly with a powerful deity.[73]

In the *Thebaid* too, Bacchus appears as a sort of *deus ex machina* and urges Hypsipyle to rescue Thoas. The epiphany establishes the close connection between the god and our heroine and provides yet another impetus for her action. Hypsipyle declares that she recognized the god (*agnoui*, 5.268), although he was not dressed in his usual attire (5.268–71) and appears to be hiding (Ganiban 2007: 83).[74] Hypsipyle's special bond with the god is thus established. The god's appearance, however, is accompanied by a confession of his failure: he states that his supplication to Jupiter has been ineffective (*supplex quae plurima fudi / ante Iouem frustra*, 5.275–76) and that Venus' unspeakable powers (*infandum . . . honorem*, 277)[75] have prevailed (see also Ganiban 2007: 83–84). Hypsipyle's own empowerment and swift action contrasts with the god's powerlessness,[76] but it also establishes that Hypsipyle's

agency is the sole human response to the corruption of the cosmic order brought on by Venus with Jupiter's tolerance. Statius places Bacchus' epiphany in the middle of Hypsipyle's actions; this contrasts with tragedy's use of the device of *deus ex machina* to provide closure. Statius' use of Euripides' Bacchus pits his helplessness against Hypsipyle's success in saving her father.[77]

Moreover, Hypsipyle's role as narrator of her own story contributes to her empowerment. Modeled after Aeneas' narration to Dido,[78] Hypsipyle's narrative to the Seven bestows on the heroine a type of authority usually only afforded to men.[79] The Seven's astonishment to find out who she is and their desire to hear her whole story are testament to her authority:[80]

> aduertere animos, maiorque et honora uideri
> parque operi tanto; cunctis tunc noscere casus
> ortus amor. (*Theb.* 5.40–42)
>
> They paid attention; she seemed greater and worthy of honor, equal to such a task; then a desire arose in all to learn the story.

As Hypsipyle starts speaking, her audience reacts like characters who experience the epiphany of a divine figure. The text emphasizes the point of view of the Seven, who respond as if they are in contact with someone possessing supernatural powers. She physically appears bigger (*maiorque*), honorable (*honora*), and capable of the enormity of the task (*parque operi tanto*). Her words infuse them with a desire to know her story (*cunctis . . . ortus amor*). To be sure, these are all attributes commonly associated with women who act transgressively under divine influence. Here Hypsipyle's power seems to derive from the act of storytelling and her alignment with the intertextual model of Aeneas narrating the fall of Troy to the enraptured Dido. Hypsipyle once again assumes a masculine role and defies the limits imposed on her by her gender and social status as slave.[81]

In conclusion, Statius uses maenadism to cast Hypsipyle's agency as powerful and potentially negative. By showing her distorting proper burial ritual and behaving like women who have succumbed to Bacchic madness and have resorted to magic rites, he draws attention to the destructive quality of female empowerment. This aspect of Hypsipyle's character exists side by side with—and complicates—her depiction as a model of *pietas*, suggested by her intertextual mirroring with Aeneas (Ganiban 2007: 71–95) or as a

victimized "other" (Augoustakis 2010: 30–91). As a result, Statius invites the reader to appreciate the differences between Hypsipyle and the other women. As an empowered individual, she places her agency in the service of familial bonds and Roman ideals, such as *pietas*.

In both Valerius and Statius, ritual appears to bestow on Hypsipyle the power to assume a role that bends traditional gender boundaries, female and male. What is more, her rituals constitute a space where gender is rendered malleable and defies stable categorization. As a result, a close examination of these ritual representations complicates our readings of Hypsipyle as disempowered. Instead it presents her as an agent who makes conscious decisions to act nobly and bravely, contrasting with the helplessness attending both divinities and male authority. The dangers involved in this empowerment are evident from her association with maenadism, which she shares with her frenzied compatriots. But she acts boldly and embodies the only viable escape from the cosmic mess that Venus and Jupiter have created. Even though Hypsipyle's actions can be construed as negative and potentially destructive, the mirroring of her empowerment with that of the other women highlights the notion that women are subjects who can make a choice to use their power for good. Hypsipyle's manipulation of gender boundaries in both narratives ends up protecting her father, and by extension the ideal of *pietas,* but eventually causes her suffering.[82] Despite this outcome, both Valerius and Statius present a powerful argument for female agency as beneficial and constructive.

The two Flavian authors thus go against Roman traditional beliefs that frown upon female action, collective or individual. As Keith (2000: 89–90) has argued, the Flavian authors use gender to illustrate the problems of war, and civil war in particular, a cue they take from their literary predecessors, especially Vergil. In doing so, they rework the Vergilian and the Ovidian intertexts to create a new moral *exemplum*, a woman whose agency shares many characteristics with destructive female collective action, but whose moral superiority and championing of values imperiled or extinct in society upsets normative gender stereotypes. Although Vergil's Dido and Amata may arouse our sympathy, they have no viable place in the new state that Aeneas helps found. By contrast, Hypsipyle, though in many ways she acts just like the Vergilian queens, constitutes a unique and unprecedented model of *pietas*, if not a wholly unambiguous one. In this light, Valerius and Statius invite their readers to reconsider established notions regarding the construction

of gender, even as they offer no easy answers. In associating female agency with positive social values, the Flavian epicists inscribe women as important participants in the moral ideology ushered in by the Flavian emperors.

The reasons behind Hypsipyle's complex portrait and the complexity of propositions it contains vis-à-vis family, community, and the state are both literary and ideological. The preoccupation of the Augustan authors with civil war and their use of gender conflict to map out the rifts in the social fabric are enthusiastically taken up by Valerius and Statius.[83] These authors recast the genre of epic, offering a new version of the challenges facing the Roman state and the empire in the Flavian period. The empowerment of women is both the result of an engagement with a literary *topos* and a reflection of the recent trauma of civil war that saw the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty and ushered in the Flavian emperors (Ahl 1986: 2812–16). In this light, it is not surprising that Bacchic ritual serves as a catalyst for female agency, aided and abetted by enduring Roman male anxieties over female collective action. In other words, the authors' desire to enter the Augustan literary dialogue seems to be part of the reason for the prominence of female subjectivity in their war narratives, although the gamut of motivations for this engagement also owes much to the ideological program of moral renewal under the new Flavian dynasty. The portrait of the women in Valerius' and Statius' epics thus poses important questions regarding the integrity of the family, society, and the state, but also proposes that on the whole, the women's contributions to public life can be positive and beneficial.

Bacchic ritual thus emerges as the space par excellence that provides women with opportunities to express their subjectivity and agency. In all narratives under examination in this section of the book, the close link between women's ritual activity and the state is in full display and confirms the importance of their religious roles in public life. Roman authors are not the first to display and problematize the extraordinary power women assume during the performance of Bacchic rites. But the extent and scope of the deployment of this theme for the articulation of political concerns in both poetry and prose is remarkable. Livy's account argues that Bacchic mystery cult needs to be controlled by the state, while Ovid warns that female empowerment, though justified, may lead to an endless cycle of violence. Both Valerius and Statius use women's collective action through the performance of maenadic ritual as at once dangerous and beneficial. In all authors, Bacchic rites either permanently negate, or have the potential to

negate, familial and social bonds, reflecting the disarray and disorder of the social fabric, whether this is the result of immorality (as in Livy), abusive power (as in Ovid), or civil conflict (as in Valerius and Statius). When women perform Bacchic ritual in the context of their bondedness with their family, however, their empowerment is positive and beneficial and serves as an enduring moral paradigm, although it is still fraught with ambiguity. In the next section, we will examine how poets use women-only rituals to express similar concerns regarding female action and its impact on the Roman state.

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PART IV

WOMEN-ONLY RITUALS

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Women-Only Rituals in Rome

In ancient Rome, descriptions of women-only rituals, such as those of Bona Dea, Fortuna Muliebris, and the Matralia, showcase the value of female sexuality and fertility.[1] Women's religious experiences and actions are intimately related to the need for concord and stability in society and, by extension, in the Roman state. Accounts of such rites in the work of different authors in the Augustan age in particular reflect their close connection with the ideology that the *princeps* sought to promote as part of his state and religious reforms.

As we have seen in previous chapters, Roman poets exhibit a preoccupation with the role of women's collective religious action and its ability to affect the public domain, especially in the context of maenadism. These rituals emerge as an integral part of Rome's foundation narrative in Augustan poets: in Vergil, women's Bacchic rites help fuel the war between the Trojan newcomers and the native Latins,[2] and in Propertius 4.9, the foundation of the Ara Maxima is cast as a reaction to Hercules' exclusion from the rites of Bona Dea (see chapter 14). Ovid presents the transformation of the Greek Ino into the Roman Mater Matuta as an etiology for the festival of Matralia, rewriting Rome's foundational story with women as the protagonists. In Flavian times, Statius' *Achilleid* depicts young Achilles as engaging in young women's rituals prior to his recruitment to fight in the Trojan war.

Our evidence for women's rites comes from inscriptions in Rome, Italy, and the other regions of the empire; from material culture, such as tombs, sarcophagi, domestic objects, and monumental architecture; from literary, philosophical, historiographical, or medical texts, and legal documents; and from the work of later authors, who wrote epitomes, compiled dictionaries, or formed collections of various sorts.[3]

Making sense out of these disparate sources is not easy. Historians of religion reconstruct women's rites either using evidence that provides very

little context (as is the case with inscriptions or material culture) or relying on sources whose purpose is far removed from historical accuracy: quite the contrary, these latter are often biased presentations of particular rites to serve specific narrative and ideological purposes. For example, it is often mentioned that during the festival of Mater Matuta, women baked cakes in pots made of earthenware. Our only sources for this information are Varro (*L*. 5.106) and Ovid (*F*. 6.476). It is impossible to know whether Varro or Ovid, or both, suppress additional information that does not otherwise survive or ascribe importance to practices that may not have been central to the cult. It is also impossible to consider Ovid's information as corroboration of Varro's evidence: he may simply be following Varro without any real knowledge of the practice from his own time.

An additional difficulty for the historian is that the textual evidence, and sometimes even the material evidence, mostly deal with elite women; the sources are silent about the religious activities of women of lower socioeconomic strata or slaves.[4] To this end, recent scholarship has focused on inscriptional or other documentary evidence with fruitful results.[5] For instance, as we have seen in our discussion of the cults of Bacchus and Isis, inscriptions reveal that both women and men were worshippers of the deities, even though Roman literary sources present them as primarily practiced by women.[6]

Despite these difficulties, it is safe to say that women's religious duties constituted an important part of their lives (Richlin 2014b: 228–30). Women were responsible for a host of daily rituals at home and participated in public festivals. For the purposes of this study, I concentrate on texts that deal with the cults of Bona Dea (Propertius 4.9), Mater Matuta (Ovid *F*. 6.473–648), and young women's rituals (Statius' *Achilleid*).[7] This sample of texts offers useful insights into the ways women's rituals are employed to articulate larger questions about religion, gender, and ideology.

Bona Dea

Bona Dea is considered a genuinely Roman goddess, connected with the city since the time of the kings (Brouwer 1989: 257). Though she has many honorific titles, no other name for her is known.[8] She appears to be a fertility deity associated with the earth and other comparable divine figures, such as Maia, Juno, Tellus, and Ceres,[9] and enjoys a native Italian/Roman identity.[10] Bona Dea does not appear to be linked, at least explicitly, to other divinities of the same type that have an Eastern provenance, such as Cybele. But, as is

the case with Cybele, her connection to the state is important. In addition, the literary sources portray her as a deity whose purview is the welfare of Rome; her worshippers are aristocratic women who represent the state and, when celebrating her rites, exclude everything male.[11] Propertius (like other literary sources) associates the goddess's proto-Roman identity, and her cult, with the notion of gender exclusion. Epigraphic documents, however, make it clear that men were indeed worshippers of the goddess.[12]

Celebrations of Bona Dea were held twice a year in Rome. There was a major festival on May 1, the anniversary of the foundation on her temple on the Aventine, *sub Saxo*, where a pregnant sow was sacrificed at her temple, the goddess's head was wreathed with vine leaves, and other rituals involving wine took place.[13] Brouwer (1989: 372) posits that Propertius' information on the exclusion of male participants from the festival is reliable. In early December, a nocturnal mystery rite in her honor was held in the home of the wife of one of the consuls or praetors,[14] attended by Vestals, other *matronae*, and female musicians, who were probably slaves (Richlin 2014b: 230). Men were not allowed to attend the rites, which, like the May festival, involved drinking wine. The strict prohibition of male participation is illustrated by the famous scandal of P. Clodius Pulcher in 62 BCE. Clodius was caught attending the mysteries dressed as a woman. The incident was pronounced a sacrilege by the Senate, and a special court was set up to perform an inquiry (Cic. *Att*. 1.13.3, Plutarch, *Caes*. 9–10), although Clodius was eventually acquitted of the charges.[15]

This short outline of the evidence surrounding the cult of the goddess shows that her worship was closely associated with the state, both because her May festival was included in the public calendar and because of the great stir Clodius' infiltration of her rites caused to the political climate of Republican Rome.[16]

Mater Matuta and the Matralia Festival

The festival of the Matralia was celebrated in Rome on June 11 in honor of the goddess Mater Matuta at her temple in the Forum Boarium. According to our sources, only Roman *matronae* who were *uniuirae* participated. They decorated her statue, offering cakes baked in pots made of earthenware. Plutarch reports that the worshipping women took with them their sisters' children, not their own, and prayed for their welfare (*Camill*. 5, *Quaest*. *Rom*. 267). Evidence that the goddess was a κουροτρόφος (child-nurturer) is supported by votive offerings found in the temples outside of Rome. These include statuettes

of women nursing children and various female anatomical parts, such as uterus and breasts, suggesting that fertility and nurture are important domains of the goddess.[17]

There is a lively scholarly debate over Mater Matuta's function. Many scholars follow ancient sources (Lucr. 5.656–57; Fest. 109 Lindsay) that connect the name Matuta with the adjective *matutinus* (of the morning) and posit that she is a goddess of the dawn and the sun. Her association with the dawn is thought to symbolize her connection with birth and the growth of animals and plants (Littlewood 2006: 147).

An explanation of the prominent role of the maternal aunt (*matertera*) in myth and cult seems more difficult. Bettini believes that the fact that each sister prayed for her nephews and nieces constitutes a mechanism of exchange that eventually protects all children and shows "a relationship of cultural contiguity between *mater* and *matertera*, which is defined at the level of religion by the ritual of the *Matralia*" (1991: 87). Boëls-Janssen (1993: 353) offers another theory by connecting the goddess's cult to social and political customs of archaic Rome. She hypothesizes that in archaic times, the daughter of a king often married a foreigner, who thus obtained the throne without having blood ties to the royal family himself. If the mother died in childbirth (not an unusual occurrence), the maternal aunt, as the closest blood relative, becomes a second mother, often marrying her sister's husband and thus offering renewed legitimacy for his rule. The goddess's worship then gives symbolic expression to familial and social customs. More recently, Smith (2000: 148) sides with those who believe the cult to be more akin to rites of passage, arguing that the Matralia was a ceremony celebrating, not birth, but the early days of the child's life, thus taking the child onto the path of growth and development.[18] It is not my purpose to delve deeper into these theories, but I append them briefly here in order to demonstrate that the Matralia festival is closely connected with the welfare of children and, more indirectly, with motherhood.

Young Women's Rituals

Our evidence regarding young women's rituals is, regrettably, scarce. We can be confident, however, that as in Greece, Roman girls' rituals revolved around rites of passage, particularly the transition from adolescence and virginity to adulthood and marriage. In festivals or on other happy occasions, such as public games or private weddings, girls are often described as acting as a group, mostly singing and dancing. For instance, Catullus 62

(discussed in chapter 2) is a wedding song presumably performed by a chorus of girls and boys singing antiphonally. In Augustus' Ludi Saeculares of 17 BCE, twenty-seven girls and boys whose parents were still living performed Horace's *Carmen saeculare* in separate choruses.[19] In many visual and textual representations of girls' participation in rituals, they carry baskets or other sacred objects necessary for the rite.[20] In all these contexts, virginity is an important attribute: it marks the young women's social status and is emblematic of the community's bright future. The girls' virginity promises that they will eventually fulfill the roles of wives and mothers successfully.

Very little is known about girls' participation in festivals. We know that young women were involved in a rite performed during the festival of Juno Sospita (Juno the Savior), which was celebrated at Lanuvium on February 1. Blindfolded maidens fed cakes to the snake in the sacred grove. The snake's eating of their food proves their virginity and ensures a good crop (Prop. 4.8.1–16). Despite the apparent connection of this rite with fertility, evidence about the military and political character of Juno Sospita has puzzled scholars.[21] Women young and old also participated in the Feralia (celebrated on February 21), in which they propitiated the Silent Goddess, the mother of Lares (Ov. *F.* 2.571–80). These examples illustrate that festivals celebrate the girls' virginity because it is particularly connected with fertility and the prosperity of the whole community.

In the following chapters, I focus on texts describing rituals in which only women were allowed to participate. I begin with Propertius 4.9, where the priestess of Bona Dea is pitted against Hercules in an etiological story situated at a time prior to Rome's foundation. Against his masculinity, she offers a more fluid definition of gender that promotes inclusivity. In a similar vein, Ovid's *Fasti* (6.473–648) recasts the early foundations of Rome, where the Latin mothers advance an inclusive foundation model that celebrates peace and fertility and is opposed to the more violent foundational story expounded in Vergil's *Aeneid*. Statius' *Achilleid* accentuates the power that girls' rituals exert over the young Achilles, thus threatening the full expression of masculinity. In all three episodes, women's rituals transcend the private sphere and directly affect matters that are of paramount importance to society and the Roman state.

Spinning Hercules

Gender, Religion, and Geography in Propertius 4.9

Hercules in Propertius' poem 4.9 has recently attracted attention as a case study in Roman notions of gender, national identity, and Augustan ideology, as well as generic notions of elegiac poetry.[1] In this chapter, I argue that the poem connects the religious framework of the cults of Bona Dea and Ara Maxima with geographical distinctions between East and West and definitions of gender identity.[2] This confluence of religion, geography, and gender informs the poem's engagement with Roman masculinity and Augustan ideology. Like the authors examined in the previous chapters, Propertius fruitfully employs the intersection of gender, ritual, and ideology and deploys female religious identity as capable of articulating an ideological viewpoint that contrasts positively to that championed by Hercules.

The poem opens with Hercules arriving at the Palatine after his Western labors. He has Geryon's cattle with him. The monster Cacus steals Hercules' cattle, but despite his clever trick to hide his theft, Hercules discovers him (thanks to the bellowing of his oxen), breaks down the cave's door, kills the villain, and establishes the Forum Boarium. Having just completed this labor, the hero, thirsty and exhausted, looks for water. The only available spring is within the sanctuary of Bona Dea, but the fountain, dedicated to the goddess, is forbidden to men. Hercules attempts to persuade the priestess to let him in on the basis of his impressive labors, but to no avail. In a last effort to convince her, Hercules suggests that he has the right of entry to the sanctuary because of his service as a female attendant in the court of the Lydian queen Omphale. The priestess remains unconvinced. Hercules, now very angry, smashes the door, enters the shrine, drinks the spring dry, and proclaims the foundation of the Ara Maxima and the exclusion of women from its worship. The poem ends with a hymnic invocation to the hero and a request to protect Propertius' book.

Hercules is a hero representing both East and West, but here, rather than cementing religious and gender roles and affirming Rome's native Italian identity, he triggers their renegotiation and redefinition. Even as Hercules seems to affirm binaries such as Roman / non-Roman, male/female, Eastern/Western, human/divine, in Propertius' narrative he blurs all of these distinctions, calling into question the adoption of clear dichotomies that operate on the basis of separation and exclusion; Through his exchanges with the priestess of Bona Dea, Hercules at least temporarily presents another ideological model that advocates integration and inclusion. At the same time, women's rituals emerge as a locus of female authority and power that lends special force to the ideological model they present within the poem. In what follows, I examine the representation of the priestess of Bona Dea together with geography and gender and propose that it articulates two different ideological models: one that is exclusionist and associated with the male and the Augustan regime, and one that is inclusionist and linked with female religious experience.

I begin with a discussion of how Hercules' association with the West helps the reader to situate the hero's affinities with early Roman religion and to perceive him as a proto-Roman deity by juxtaposing his worship to that of Bona Dea, a native Italian goddess. At the same time, the poem connects Hercules with the East. Here, however, Hercules' Eastern identity conforms to the general character of Roman religion, which champions inclusivity. I argue that the poem uses the etiology of religious practices and customs as a means of exploring these notions of inclusion and exclusion and posits a model of inclusivity that is particularly associated with female authority and power. This model is ultimately rejected by the "Augustan" Hercules, yet its articulation within the poem's dramatization of the founding of the Ara Maxima lends it particular resonance as an alternative ideological proposition to the one that the poem ostensibly affirms.

Geography

Geographical distinctions are embedded in the poem's deployment of religious and national identities, as both deities, Hercules and Bona Dea, are closely linked with the beginnings of Rome.[3] Hercules is established early in the poem as proto-Roman, coming from the West (even though later, in his exchanges with the priestess of Bona Dea, he links himself with the East). The narrative begins with a detailed account of Hercules' "Roman" labor, the

slaying of the monster Cacus, emphasizing its connections with the topography of Augustan Rome and the Ara Maxima in particular. The poem's opening avoids any mention of Hercules' labors on Greek soil and instead connects him with the West, which readily encourages associations with Italy and especially Rome, because of their geographical proximity:

> Amphitryoniades qua tempestate iuuencos
> egerat a stabulis, o Erythea, tuis,
> uenit ad inuictos, pecorosa Palatia, montes,
> et statuit fessos fessus et ipse boues
> qua Velabra suo stagnabant flumine quoque
> nauta per urbanas uelificabat aquas. (4.9.1–6)
>
> At the time when Amphitryon's son had driven his steers from your stalls,
> O Erythea, he came at the impregnable hills, the Palatine rich in cattle, and
> placed his worn-out cattle—worn-out himself—where the Velabrum's waters
> lay still and the seafarer was making sail over a city's waters.

Hercules is coming from Erythea (4.9.2), an island in the far west, where he had just killed the three-bodied monster Geryon, whose cattle he is bringing back home. The story of the slaying of Cacus seems to be a doublet of that labor,[4] situating Hercules in Rome as one of its foundational heroes. Civic topography comes into play here, as Hercules visits some of the oldest and most venerable sites of the city, particularly the location of the Lupercal in the Palatine (4.9.3), the cave where Romulus and Remus were found. Hercules' cattle graze at the Velabrum (4.9.5), the low ground between the Palatine and the Capitol, which borders on the south with the Forum Boarium (*aruaque . . . Boaria*, 4.9.19).[5] Cacus himself was thought to have been living on the Aventine.[6] Propertius renders the etiological and ideological work behind the listing of these locations explicit when he links them to the heart of Roman civic space, the Forum (*nobile erit Romae . . . forum*, 4.9.20). In other words, Hercules' movements connect past and present: as is well known, Augustus' dwelling was on the Palatine, triumphal processions concluded on the Capitoline Hill, and the Forum was the center of Roman political life. Hercules' footsteps thus link the hero with the landscape of Augustan Rome and with the *princeps* in particular.

Similarly, as we have seen, Bona Dea has been considered a genuinely Roman goddess since the city's foundation. Although Propertius associates the goddess with gender exclusion, epigraphic documents make it clear that

both men and women were involved in her cult (as noted in chapter 13:173). It appears that the importance of geography and gender for the Augustan program of moral reform is behind Propertius' focus on the sanctuary of Bona Dea Subsaxana on the Aventine, the largest of her places of worship in Rome and the locus of her official urban cult.[7] It was this temple that was restored by Augustus' wife Livia, emphasizing the role of patrician women in the preservation of the goddess's worship. The temple and the cult thus reinforced normative male and female roles and symbolized their importance to the nation's moral welfare. Moreover, they served as yet another reminder of the renewal of all things genuinely Roman by the new *princeps* and his family (Welch 2004: 71–72).

Geographical binaries are also operative in Hercules' efforts to persuade the women to give him access to their sanctuary, since the hero connects himself to both the West and the East. First, he accentuates his Western provenance to indicate that he deserves to be considered Roman. More specifically, he identifies himself by pointing to his "western" labors: his encounter with Atlas (*tergo qui sustulit orbem* 4.9.37) and his journey to the underworld (4.9.41). To be sure, Hercules can count on Bona Dea's priestess to be more familiar with his western labors because of their proximity to Rome, and it is important that he establish his own connections to the city upon arrival. In other words, his adventures in the west serve to legitimize his claim to be part of the religious pantheon of proto-Rome.[8] His struggle with Geryon and Cacus is especially significant in this regard, because it establishes the hero as a special protective divinity, intimately linked to Italy's pastoral roots (Burkert 1979: 84–85). Hercules' worship at the Ara Maxima (and at various other localities in Rome) resembles hero cults in the various Greek colonies. As Malkin notes:

> [The hero-cult] provided a point of cohesion and social identification of the colonists, being, as it were, the first cult which was the colony's own, not having been imported from its mother-city. As such it made concrete and perpetual the possession of the colony, it accorded the colonists the heroic protection of their own guardian hero (*polissouchos*) and provided each colony with its first historic symbol *ab urbe condita*.[9]

Hercules plays a comparable role in Rome, being the personal protector of Roman generals from Scipio to Antony; his role is further enhanced at the time of Augustus through the hero's identification with the *princeps* and his association with Stoic virtue (Galinsky 1972: 127, 131–49). As a result, this part

of the poem emphasizes that Hercules' civilizing achievements align with Rome's role as a benevolent empire. His association with Rome's earliest beginnings renders him a permanent protective hero. His arrival in Rome after various wanderings mirrors the Romans' own arrival at their city, while his connections with native Italian elements lend further legitimacy to his status as a local deity. Even the fact that his rites at the Ara Maxima are performed *Graeco ritu* aligns him with proto-Rome and its earliest inhabitant, the Greek Evander.[10]

In Propertius 4.9, as Hercules' efforts to survive in this new milieu meet with resistance from the women, the hero readily adopts a new identity, which is at once Eastern and feminine:

> Idem ego Sidonia feci seruilia palla
> officia et Lydo pensa diurna colo;
> mollis et hirsutum cinxit mihi fascia pectus,
> et manibus duris apta puella fui. (4.9.47–50)
>
> So did I complete my service wearing a Sidonian shawl and my daily work at the Lydian distaff; my shaggy chest was once girded by a soft breast band, and I was a proper girl though my hands were rough.

The hero mentions his service to the Lydian queen Omphale, his Sidonian cloak, and wool spinning (48). Hercules' clothing stresses Omphale's foreignness and connects her with *luxuria*, a concept that connotes the corruption of the East.[11] His connection with Omphale has particular resonance in an Augustan context. Omphale frequently stands for moral disorder, as she is associated with Cleopatra to help ridicule Antony's self-representation as Hercules (Zanker 1988: 59). In addition to the literary representations of Omphale and Hercules in Propertius and Ovid, paintings and other artwork of this period emphasize the motif of a "dominating Eastern queen who can reduce a hero to a fool. The hero's desire, unmastered, allows others to master him."[12] Hercules thus emerges as at once embodying what is Roman and what is Eastern, just as he seeks to be considered both male and female. The fluidity in Hercules' identity complicates his portrait as a proto-Roman hero and is opposed to the Augustan ideological portrait of Hercules as a champion of civilizing masculinity. A closer look at the role of religion in the poem will help shed light on the reasons behind Propertius' rendering of Hercules as geographically ambiguous.

Religion

A similar ambiguity surrounding Hercules is evident in the context of Greek and Roman cult. In Greece, ephebic rituals often include gender inversion on the part of the initiate as a means of marking his transition to adulthood.[13] Evidence of other kinds of ritual transvestism also exists. Plutarch, for instance, tells of the priest of Heracles at Cos, who wears women's clothes and headdress when he sacrifices, and of husbands who put on women's clothes to receive their brides (*Quaest. Graec.* 58). Macrobius (*Sat.* 3.8.2–3) discusses cross-dressed priests (male and female) making offerings to Cyprian Aphroditus, a divinity portrayed as having a female shape and clothing like Aphrodite, but also a beard and penis,[14] while the Byzantine antiquarian Lydus (*De mensibus* 4.67)[15] describes men dressed as women in the mysteries of Hercules at Rome. These practices, along with their etiologies, point to a similarity to Cybele and her Galli: the castrated priests are a symbol of the goddess's power, which demands the emasculation or feminization of men (Kampen 1996: 243, Suhr 1953).

Hercules' wish to be part of the Roman pantheon is not without precedent. On the whole, Roman religion was inclusive.[16] Romans had long recognized the importance of foreign divinities for the welfare of their growing state, which resulted in their incorporation in state cult. For example, the practice of *euocatio*, the summoning of a deity from its resident city to relocate in Rome, demonstrates the ease with which Roman state religion was able to assimilate foreign divinities for political gain.[17] Moreover, Romans were particularly careful to observe the fundamental practices of the imported cult, even if they clashed with Roman morals: for instance, Cybele's Eastern cult, which was offensive to Romans in that it required priests to be eunuchs, did not prevent the establishment of her temple on the Palatine, the heart of the city of Rome, as early as 204 BCE.[18]

Inclusivity and Poetics

The poem's blending of elegiac and hymnic tropes further highlights the importance of the notions of inclusivity and blending not only for the construction of a national ideology but also for the creation of powerful poetry. Scholars have noted the various genres that coalesce or clash in the poem, but little attention has been paid to the poem's function as a hymn.[19] The patronymic *Amphitryoniades* (4.9.1), which opens the poem, not only creates a tone more appropriate for epic than for love elegy[20] but also recalls the practice

of ritual hymns.[21] Other hymnic elements abound: the narrator illustrates important *aretai* of the hero by recounting famous incidents in which he participated and excelled (4.9.1–20) and includes a cautionary tale, the punishment of the priestess of Bona Dea, who refused to grant the hero access to the temple. Such tales are typical of hymns, both as a warning to the profane and, by implication, as encouragement to the pious and initiated. The poem ends with a formal hymnic greeting to the hero. It is no coincidence that all of these characteristics are found in Callimachus' fifth hymn,[22] also known as "The Bath of Pallas," a text deeply important for our elegy, as the explicit reference to the story of Tiresias attests.

The closing section of Propertius' poem is epicletic and points to religious inclusivity:

> hunc, quoniam manibus purgatum sanxerat orbem,
> sic Sancum Tatiae composuere Cures.
> sancte pater, salue, cui iam fauet aspera Iuno;
> Sance, uelis libro dexter inesse meo. (4.9.71–74)
>
> This hero, since with his hands he cleansed and sanctified the world, the Sabine Cures enshrined as the Sacred One. Hail, holy father, on whom even harsh Juno now smiles. Sacred One, please be favorable to my book.

Hercules is named as Sancus or Sanctus. Regardless of which reading one adopts, it is agreed that the reference is to Hercules' identification with the Sabine deity Deus Fidius.[23] According to various sources, Sancus had a temple on the Quirinal and is thought to have been one of the major deities of the Sabines, who brought his cult to Rome. At first glance, Propertius' reference to this name for Hercules seems strange and out of place. In fact, one commentator is at a loss as to why this deity is mentioned here, since there is no evidence linking Sancus to the cult of the Ara Maxima, while there were numerous cult places of Hercules in Rome (Richardson 1977: 476). Yet Hercules emerges as the perfect vehicle to embody Roman inclusivity in the religious realm: though a Greek, he is one of the first heroes to establish a Roman cult;[24] though a mortal, he became a god because of his own *uirtus*.[25] His Sabine name and connection with the Quirinal at the end of the poem underscore his ties with the earliest beginnings of Rome, while demonstrating that *Romanitas* is the product of assimilation and inclusion.[26]

The intersection of ritual and inclusivity in the construction of Roman national identity is also salient in *Aeneid* 8.102–336, a text very important for

4.9.[27] I have argued elsewhere that in the *Aeneid*, the proposed Roman model of leadership and religiosity that Aeneas is called on to follow is one of inclusion and peaceful coexistence of several peoples (in this case Greeks and various Latins).[28] In Vergil's narrative of rituals surrounding the foundation and celebration of the Ara Maxima and the benefaction of Hercules to the community, we witness a blending of Greek, Italian, and Roman institutions. These rituals and practices are meant as an important lesson to Aeneas, who will be called to become a uniting figure himself at the end of the poem (*A.* 12.820–40). As a result, ritual, history, and policy emerge as interconnected spheres in the life of a community.

Gender

Geography also helps us better understand the articulation of gender in the poem and its role in the formation of Roman identity. As several scholars have persuasively demonstrated, the figure of Hercules, poised between the categories of male and female, as well as human and divine, East and West, belies the very dichotomies he appears to assert. At the same time, gender and geography are both intricately linked with power in Roman ideology, which is here predicated upon the interplay of the notions of inclusion and exclusion. Both the priestess of Bona Dea and Hercules appear to advocate the exclusion of the opposite sex from their rites. I submit that women's rituals in this poem illuminate the concepts of gender inclusion and exclusion in important ways. If we press the details of the priestess's stance toward Hercules, we may find that she presents a more inclusionist attitude toward religion, identity, and empire than previously thought.[29]

Hercules can quench his thirst only within the bounds of the Bona Dea shrine; thus the sanctuary is cast as a seat of power that is controlled by women. That the issue of power is here at stake is emphasized by the ways in which Propertius manipulates certain details of the story. For example, as commentators have pointed out, there was plenty of water in the area to which Hercules could have access (e.g. 4.9.5–6, quoted above); yet we are told that the hero is tortured by thirst and that the sanctuary appears as the only source of water (4.9.21–22).[30] Moreover, it has been noted that the women's power is not only literal but also sexual, the hero's thirst being a symbol of his erotic desire.[31] The earth, described as withholding water from the hero while she is "pregnant" with it (*terraque non ullas feta ministrat aquas*, 4.9.22) can be seen as a double for the priestess (and by extension the goddess, whose fertility is here implied) who refuses access to the sanctuary.[32] Both show

that control of female sexuality rests with the women and threatens the hero's very survival. Hercules' effort to be admitted does not upset this power balance: his stint as Omphale's slave establishes that he too has been dominated by a powerful Eastern queen, a pairing that mirrors the pattern of the powerful fertility goddesses and their submissive male counterparts.[33] The liminal space in which the encounter occurs, the threshold of the goddess's sanctuary (*et iacit ante fores uerba minora deo*, 4.9.32), is also important in this power equation between the hero and the priestess.[34] Liminal spaces are fruitful ground for the expression of gender ambiguity, especially in the case of young people on the verge of making their passage to adulthood.[35] As a result, the priestess's threshold emerges as an appropriate space for Hercules' attempt at gender bending, while the priestess herself is invested with the power to determine his success or failure in this regard.

In addition, the grove (*lucus*, 4.9.24;[36] *luci sacro . . . antro*, 4.9.33; *lucoque . . . uerendo*, 4.9.53)[37] in which the sanctuary is located, is related to the gender/power dynamics operative within the poem's metapoetic and intertextual program. Groves are commonly used as a metaphor for poetry,[38] and the goddess's *lucus* falls within the many other ways in which the poem negotiates the boundaries of the poem's genre.[39] As a result, in the context of generic tensions between epic (Hercules' achievements) and elegy (Hercules as elegiac *exclusus amator*), the women's control of the grove draws them closer to the role of the *puella* as *domina* in love elegy, while Hercules' transvestism is part of the familiar gender inversion found in the elegiac *topos* of *servitium amoris*.[40] The women's control of the water and the grove can thus be interpreted as female agency that extends on many levels: religious, sexual, and metapoetic.

Hercules' "gender" in Propertius 4.9 has been the subject of a lively debate.[41] Scholars have convincingly argued that Hercules' overt virility causes his gender transformation to fail, producing a comic effect, which in turn asserts the hero's masculine power (DeBrohun 1994: 49–50). At the same time, the reader's comic reaction to Hercules' image as a transvestite is guided by the priestess's reaction: unconvinced by his assertions that he can be categorized as female, she pronounces him a man, who cannot be accepted within the shrine (*interdicta uiris*, 4.9.55). In her rejection, the priestess offers a mythical and literary parallel, that of Tiresias.[42] The importance of this cautionary tale is paramount because it connects the notions of inclusion and exclusion with the notion of gender. Metapoetic concerns are also at stake here, since the reference to Tiresias is part of the elegy's mobilization of the

hymnic genre, which, as we have seen, is an important intertext for this poem. Callimachus' fifth hymn and its version of the story of Tiresias specifically come to mind at this juncture.[43] Tiresias' example initially seems to fall within a similar configuration of power to the one that Hercules presents: male sexuality intrudes upon female sexual power only to be crushed by it.

The example of Tiresias that the priestess of Bona Dea presents, however, can also be seen as championing an ideal of inclusivity: just as the "Eastern" model that Hercules offers allows a comfortable alternation between male and female identities, so the priestess's example, even as it ostensibly serves to cast Hercules as male, involves two sexually ambiguous figures, Athena and Tiresias. Both defy easy gender characterizations: the virgin goddess supports all things male, while Tiresias is the mediator par excellence because of his transgression of various boundaries, especially those between male and female (Brisson 2002: 116). Morrison argues convincingly that the ambiguity surrounding Tiresias is evident in Callimachus' hymn, especially in the description of Tiresias.[44] Propertius links Hercules with Tiresias in several subtle ways, even if their similarity is not obvious at first sight. To be sure, Tiresias is a youth—his beard is just beginning to cover his cheeks (Call. *Hymns* 5.75)—and Hercules appears as a seasoned, masculine warrior (*sin autem uultusque meus saetaeque leonis / terrent et Libyco sole perusta coma . . .* [but if my appearance, my lion's mane, or my hair parched by the Libyan sun frighten you . . .], 4.9.45–46). Yet they both find themselves in a place where women are dominant (the baths of the goddess, the shrine of Bona Dea). Moreover, this place is liminal, where gender demarcations appear uncertain. Erotic motifs related to the presence of water or baths abound in Callimachus,[45] and, as we have seen, Propertius deftly manipulates the erotic and elegiac connotations of Hercules' need for water. In Callimachus, the young and inexperienced Tiresias is punished for his potentially dangerous masculinity as he intrudes upon the goddess's naked virginity. In Propertius, Hercules argues that his masculinity is subject to interpretation. In casting himself as a cross-dressed female slave, Hercules embraces the sexual ambiguity usually surrounding youths like Tiresias, whose proper passage to adulthood is a precarious journey. As a result, the priestess's verdict on Hercules' gender may ostensibly affirm gender demarcation and exclusion (which is also reflected in cult practices),[46] but her justification of this demarcation through the example of Tiresias also demonstrates that inclusivity is predicated on the permanent submission of the male to female power.[47]

Tiresias' blindness and exclusion from the normative definition of either gender manifests his permanent submission to the power of Athena. In effect the priestess is saying that, since Hercules' submission is temporary, he cannot be part of the goddess's shrine, allowing for the possibility of his inclusion had he still been under feminine control.

Hercules violently imposes male control on a space of traditional female agency and authority, replacing it with another exclusionist monument, the Ara Maxima (4.9.69–70), a monument connected with Augustus, as it marked his victory over Antony and the conquest of the East.[48] Earlier, however, Hercules, the champion of Augustan masculinity, presented the priestess with a model of inclusion, a model connected with the East: Hercules' experience at the court of Omphale offers, as we have seen, the possibility of blurring gender boundaries. At the same time, the underlying similarity of Omphale to Eastern fertility goddesses such as Cybele reminds the reader of the inclusivity that has characterized Roman religious practice since its inception, a practice that, far from rejecting the East, embraces it and assimilates it.[49] Viewed in the combined framework of ritual and gender, the more inclusionist attitude of the Roman state is specifically linked with the female. Hercules' eventual foundation of the Ara Maxima points to a rejection of this inclusive femininity, as it purports to affirm exclusive Roman masculinity.

The priestess's reference to Callimachus' fifth hymn also relates to the poem's metapoetic agenda and emphasizes the link between the power of interpretation and female religious activity.[50] In Callimachus, the fact that neither Athena nor Tiresias is comfortable with their roles of naked, sexually attractive female goddess and male intruder/sexual aggressor, respectively, is paralleled in the narrative by a similar ambiguity or uncertainty surrounding the sex of the hymn's narrator. At the end of the hymn both the sex of the speaker and the identity of the hymn's audience remain uncertain. This double ambiguity of form and content on the one hand emphasizes the poem's mimetic status, while on the other it makes the point that divinity ultimately resists all representation (Morrison 2005: 42–43). In Propertius too, the problem of interpreting the hero's gender lies with the priestess, who both provides him with a stable gender identity and points out the conditions under which masculinity can be negotiated. Propertius chooses to invest female religious authority with poetry's ultimate power to create a multiplicity of possible meanings. As a result, Propertius' hymnic experiment connects the power of poetry with female religious agency and power.[51]

The poem's ideological agenda can be read as using Hercules to promote the Augustan program of religious reform. Hercules is an obvious model for the *princeps* and the state, a representative of genuine *Romanitas*. At the same time, the reference to the hero's time with Omphale and the priestess's counterexample of Tiresias point to a model of religious inclusivity that is genuinely Roman but appears no longer supported by the Augustan agenda, as exemplified by Hercules' exclusion of women from his worship. This alternative model allows for the coexistence of elements Eastern and Western, which is also cast as allowing a certain flexibility in the definition of gender and the traditional power configuration between male and female. The poem's hymnic and ritual ending, with its reference to Hercules' Sabine name, points to his identity as native Italian god and therefore to the same type of inclusionist qualities that he seems initially to advocate but eventually defies. Let us not forget that in the *Aeneid*, Hercules is also firmly linked to a ritual setting that fosters the incorporation of foreigners (Evander and Aeneas) and looks forward to the ultimate incorporation of Aeneas' Trojans among the Latin peoples. In Propertius, this alternative model and ritual setting are linked to the female religious experience, which thus emerges as a locus of particular agency and power.

In the next chapter, we see a different foundation story in Ovid's *Fasti* 6, where Hercules comes to the rescue of the beleaguered Ino. Cast as a new Aeneas, Ino will transform into the deity Mater Matuta and will be celebrated at the women's festival of Matralia as protector of children and mothers. Like Propertius before him, Ovid uses the figure of Hercules and his unique relationship to women-only rituals to offer a new foundational model for Rome.

Hercules and the Founding Mothers

Mater Matuta and the Matralia in Ovid's *Fasti* 6

Ovid's *Fasti*, which celebrates the festivals and rites of the Roman calendar, is a poem closely linked to the Augustan ideological program. This civic poetry, however, is written in elegiac couplets, also aligning it with the private (and perhaps anti-Augustan) world of elegy. Critics in the last twenty years have done much to promote our understanding of the poem's genre and its connections with Callimachean poetics, Augustan ideology, and even Roman concepts of masculinity.[1]

Ovid's *Fasti* 6 offers a prime example of the importance of women's religious activities for the welfare of the Roman state. The book is almost wholly devoted to women's rituals, providing etiologies for ritual celebrations going back to the beginnings of Rome.[2] The connections of this book with Augustus' family could not have been clearer, as it includes an address to Augustus' wife, Livia. The poet/narrator calls upon her as a protector of *concordia* for Roman mothers and the Roman state,[3] and it firmly establishes the bearing these mythical moments have on contemporary Rome.[4] In particular, *Fasti* 6.473–648, a narrative offering an etiology for the cult of Mater Matuta, illustrates how the ritual roles of women directly affect the life of the state.

Ovid's version of the story begins with the Theban princess Ino, Semele's sister and aunt of the god Bacchus, who cared for him after his mother's death (inflicted by a jealous Juno) when he was still an infant.[5] Juno, angry at Ino's services to Bacchus, drives her husband, Athamas, mad. In his madness, Athamas kills one of their two sons, Learchus. Ino then rushes to save her other son, baby Melicertes, jumping into a river with him. The river nymphs save them. At this point, the Greek version of the myth ends with Ino's transformation into Leucothea, while the baby takes a new name, Palaemon.[6]

Ovid continues the tale by having both mother and child arrive at the grove of Stimula in Latium. There Juno, disguised as one of the Latin women,

rouses the other women against Ino, claiming that the newcomer wants to spy on their secret Bacchic rites. As the poor woman and her baby are in danger at the hands of the Latin maenads, Hercules appears, scares the maenads away, and saves Ino and the baby. Ino subsequently finds hospitality at the house of Carmentis, the mother of Evander, who prophesies that Ino will bring great benefits to Romans. Ino is renamed once again as Mater Matuta and her baby as Portunus. The festival of Matralia is established to commemorate this happy occasion.[7]

Focusing on relationships among women and on women's actions, Ino's story is closely linked to the city's foundation and is offered as a positive alternative to male foundation narratives encountered in other Augustan authors, primarily Vergil's *Aeneid*. Indeed, as scholars have long noted, Vergil is an important foil to our understanding of the Mater Matuta episode in the *Fasti* and our appreciation of its relationship to the Augustan ideological program.[8] Ovid uses Vergil's foundational story, which centers on men's actions, and transforms it into one revolving around women.

The significance of women's rituals for the foundational beginnings of Rome is bolstered by the presence of Hercules in Ovid's account of Mater Matuta. The narrative connects Mater Matuta, a κουροτρόφος deity (one that nurtures the young), with Hercules, the epitome of civilizing strength, thus highlighting both fertility and military strength as essential components of the city's founding institutions. Yet as we read *Fasti* 6 in its entirety, we also see a correlation of rituals restricted to women, namely the Vestalia, the Matralia, and the cult of Fortuna Muliebris, with male aggression and war.[9] To be sure, this connection is already attested in the topography of Rome: the temples of Mater Matuta and Fortuna are located in the vicinity of a complex of temples dedicated to Hercules in the Forum Boarium, where triumphal processions took place.[10] This complex represents a host of spatial associations between the state's concern for fertility and military success.

Fertility is often particularly important in foundation stories, and this episode is no exception. Ovid's narrative establishes Ino's connection with fertility and her future identity as κουροτρόφος by beginning the account with Ino's protecting and nursing the orphan Bacchus (*accipit Ino/te, puer, et summa sedula nutrit ope* [Ino took you in, child, and nursed you eagerly with utmost care], 6.485–86). Bacchus' associations with nature's abundance and fecundity link him closely with women. As we have seen in the previous chapters, Bacchic rites, in their benign form, give free rein to the

expression of female aggression only to ensure that the powers of sexuality and fertility will be eventually contained within the realm of the home. To be sure, as we have repeatedly seen throughout this book, they also have the potential to become uncontrolled and thus do harm rather than good, especially where male children are concerned. (See chapters 10, 11, 12.)

Juno's jealousy of Bacchus also connects the realms of marriage and childbearing, which fall within Juno's purview, with fertility in nature, which falls within Bacchus'. In this episode, the portrait of Ino as the victim of Juno's jealousy and hatred results in Bacchic madness and infanticide (the death of Learchus).[11] This constitutes yet another instance of a familiar pattern of female sexuality gone awry (even though Juno's agent in this case is Athamas, a male) and turned into aggression targeted against children. Ovid's dramatization of the story of madness and infanticide, as well as Ino's incorporation within the narrative of the beginnings of the Roman state, affirms the value of childbearing and childrearing even as it expresses anxieties over the ability to control the potential for aggression.

Furthermore, the Bacchants in Ovid's narrative take on a purely Roman identity, even though their behavior owes a debt to Greek literary representations. The maenads' attack takes place at the grove of Stimula near the Aventine. The text repeatedly links them with the beginnings of Rome and Italy (*maenadas Ausonias*, 6.504; *Latias . . . Bacchas*, 6.507). Moreover, Ino's coming as a guest to Carmentis, Evander's mother (*Arcadas esse/ audit et Euandrum sceptra tenere loci* [she hears that they are Arcadians and that the leader of the land is Evander], 6.505–06); *hospita Carmentis fidos intrasse penates/ diceris* [it is said that you entered the loyal house of Carmentis as a guest], 6.529–30; Littlewood 2006: 160), links her to Aeneas' guest-friendship with Evander in Vergil's *Aeneid* 8, a moment of foundational importance for Rome.[12] Ino's trajectory is thus analogous to that of Aeneas in his quest to found a new nation.

Hercules' presence in the narrative of Ino and the Latin women also links Bacchic, female aggression with military, male violence. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas' arrival in Latium and his future role in Italy are connected to the ritual commemoration of Hercules' conquest of the monster Cacus and the foundation of the Ara Maxima (*A.* 8.1–369). While Vergil's narrative of Aeneas' arrival at the site of Rome is a purely male affair (no female figures are anywhere present), Ovid offers a vivid picture of a female deity as an important component of this locale's history. While in the *Aeneid* we see a privileging of male aggression, Ovid highlights Ino's contribution as κουροτρόφος

to the state's stability and concord. Furthermore, in Vergil, Aeneas' arrival in Latium triggers a war between Trojans and Latins, a military conflict foreshadowed in the episode of Hercules and Cacus. Ovid provides a sharp contrast to the Vergilian account by blending Greek, Italian, and Roman elements in the narrative of Ino's plight.

The introduction of Hercules as protector of Ino constitutes a rewriting of his Vergilian aggressive behavior in the same locale. Hercules, the model of the male warrior, is now transformed into the guarantor of the safety of a mother and foster mother and firmly connects the sanctity of motherhood with the military concerns of the state. These associations are significant for our appreciation of the Augustan religious and ideological framework within which Ovid operates.[13] The foundational role of women emerges as an alternative to that of men and complicates the Augustan ideological message, which now appears susceptible to alternative interpretations. The ideological meaning of Rome's foundation turns out to be a rich and complex process that includes the contributions of women, even as these can be deemed as potentially dangerous.

Bacchic Ritual and Foundational Narrative

As the narrator in the episode, Bacchus is closely connected with a story that pertains to the early history of Rome. His presence also lends authority to Ovid's account of the etiology of the rites in honor of Mater Matuta. The alignment of Bacchus with the poet's work (*derige uatis opus*, 484 [direct the poet's task]) distances Bacchic frenzy and madness from the god's beneficent divinity.[14] The description of the god's appearance, adorned with clustered grapes and ivy (*racemiferos hedera distincte capillos* [your hair, bearing bunches of grapes, adorned with ivy], 6.483), emphasizes his connection with vegetation and nature's fertility in general and foreshadows the fact that all destructive frenzy will be delegated to the realm of Juno.

Ino's status as *matrona*, a respectable wife and mother, is not a product of her later "Romanization" but is already in place in the Greek sources (Parker 1999: 338–40). Ino appears to have been a conscientious mother, nurturing her sister's orphan (6.488–89), and dutifully performing burial rites for her dead son, Learchus (*maesta Learcheas mater tumulauerat umbras/et dederat miseris omnia iusta rogis* [his mournful mother covered the shades of Learchus with a tomb and gave all the proper rites to the sorrowful pyre], 6.491–92).[15] She succumbs to frenzy and baby snatching—a practice performed by maenads in Greek narratives (E. *Ba.* 754), as we have seen—only

because of her immense grief (*haec quoque, funestos ut erat laniata capillos/prosilit et cunis te, Melicerta, rapit* [tearing her mournful hair, she too leaps forward and snatches you, Melicertes, from your cradle], 6.493–94), but she does not kill Melicertes. Ino's pain at the death of Learchus also turns into Bacchic madness in *Met*. 4.519–20; 521–24 (Littlewood 2002: 198). In the *Fasti*, explicit maenadic references are absent, although Ino is portrayed as having her hair loose in mourning, an attribute also applicable to Bacchic possession and used to describe the Latian Bacchae later on (*thyiades, effusis per sua colla comis* [the Thyiads, their hair loose on their shoulders], 6.514). Ino is also said to leap forward (*prosilit,* 6.494), a violent movement, often denoting the movement of maenads.[16] As a result, the description of her subsequent actions can hardly be removed from a Bacchic framework; nor can they be thought of as the actions of a dignified Roman *mater dolorosa* (Littlewood 2002: 199).

Ovid depicts Ino's state of mind (*insanis*, 497) as she attempts suicide by transferring the turbulence of her emotions onto the landscape. She jumps from the Isthmus,[17] which is described as beaten by two seas at once. This description of the Isthmus is announced by a formula typical of *ekphrasis* (Littlewood 2006: 156). Here, however, the peculiarity of the landscape reflects Ino's predicament:

> est spatio contracta breui, freta bina repellit,
> unaque pulsatur, terra, duabus aquis:
> huc uenit insanis natum complexa lacertis,
> et secum celso mittit in alta iugo. (6.495–98)
>
> There is a land shrunk in a narrow space, keeping off twin seas and, though one, is lashed by waters on two sides. There comes Ino holding her son in her mad embrace and hurls herself and him from a high ridge into the deep.

The Isthmus stands as an analogy for Ino, one entity, constrained (*contracta*) and assaulted by forces on either side (*una . . . duabus aquis*). The turbulence of the water and the land's helpless passivity are conveyed through the use of the passive *pulsatur*, while Ino's metaphorical resistance to the madness and violent potential is denoted by *repellit*, a word often found in a military context. Ino's decision to jump betrays the triumph of the forces of madness, while her subsequent rescue from the river nymphs attests her innocence.

The lack of explicit Bacchic vocabulary in the description of Ino's madness captures the ambiguity and liminality surrounding her at this moment.

As she carries out the funeral rites for her dead son, she is performing a ritual that underscores her suitability for the role of model mother. Yet her excessive grief within the context of burial, evident in her implicit Bacchic behavior, also highlights the dangers inherent in female religious action.[18] Ovid's careful avoidance of explicit Bacchic imagery further serves to smooth out Ino's eventual transition from Greek Bacchant into Roman *matrona*. The text calls attention to this process of transition and transformation by referring to the eventual naming of mother and child as the Greek divinities Leucothea and Palaemon, and thereby placing emphasis on the story's function as a foundation myth. By hinting at their eventual Roman identity without yet revealing their Roman names, Ovid further indicates that this is a transitional moment: *nondum Leucothea, nondum puer ille Palaemon/uerticibus densi Thybridis ora tenent*, 6.501–02 (they reach the mouth of the Tiber thick with eddies, she not yet as Leucothea, that boy not yet as Palaemon).[19]

Despite Ino's portrayal as a model mother, anxieties over the risks of societal discord persist. The potential for destruction inherent in women's collective religious action now becomes a reality through Juno's intervention. This violence no longer takes place in the distant Greek soil but on Roman, the grove of Semele/Stimula, which lies between the Tiber and the Aventine, and will later become the setting for the notorious scandal of the Bacchanalia in 186 BCE (Liv. 39.12.4; Littlewood 2006: 159).

lucus erat, dubium Semelae Stimulaene uocetur;
maenadas Ausonias incoluisse ferunt:
quaerit ab his Ino quae gens foret. Arcadas esse
audit et Euandrum sceptra tenere loci;
dissimulata deam Latias Saturnia Bacchas
instimulat fictis insidiosa sonis:
"o nimium faciles, o toto pectore captae,
non uenit haec nostris hospes amica choris.
fraude petit, sacrique parat cognoscere ritum:
quo possit poenas pendere pignus habet."
uix bene desierat, complent ululatibus auras
thyiades, effusis per sua colla comis,
iniciuntque manus puerumque reuellere pugnant. (6.503–15)

There was a grove—it is doubtful whether it is called that of Semele or Stimula—they say that Ausonian maenads dwelled therein. Ino asks them their origin. She hears that they are Arcadians and that Evander holds sway

> in the land; deceitful Saturnian Juno, pretending to be the goddess, pricks the Latian Bacchants with false words: "O too gullible, O blinded in your hearts, this guest has not come as a friend to our dances. She seeks her goal with fraud and is getting ready to learn our sacred rites: she has a pledge by which we can exact punishment." Hardly had she finished when the Thyiads fill the air with their shrieks, their hair streaming down their necks, and lay their hands on Ino and struggle to tear away the boy from her.

Juno usurps the prerogative of Bacchus and Semele to inflict madness upon their worshippers (*dissimulata; fictis . . . sonis; insidiosa*) and incites them to attack Ino.[20] The violence of the maenads is the result of Juno's violent rousing of the women. It is described with the verb *instimulat*, a word from the equestrian realm that refers to the goading and pricking of horses and which may be construed as providing an etiological etymology for the naming of the grove of Stimula.[21] Juno purports to protect the secrecy surrounding female religious activity by suggesting that Ino seeks to encroach upon and learn the secret sacred rites of the women. Juno here may be capitalizing on Ino's portrait as a caring mother, who could potentially be opposed to engaging in rites that may cause children harm. The destructive nature of the women's religious activity subsequently emerges full scale as the maenads attack mother and child.[22] The use of the verb *reuellere* to describe the tearing of the child from the mother's embrace may also hint at the probability that a *sparagmos* will follow, frequently practiced in literary maenadic rites, and usually involving young animals (especially deer) or male children.[23] Littlewood (2006: 161) notes a series of allusions that the verb mobilizes. Vergil employs it to describe the decapitation of Orpheus (*caput a ceruice reuulsum*, *Geo.* 4.523). The phrase points to Ennius' *Annales*, where it was probably used in the context of battle (fr. 483 Skutsch: *caput a ceruice reuolsum*). Vergil transposes it into a Bacchic context to describe Orpheus' *sparagmos* at the hands of Bacchants (*Geo.* 4.520–22). The allusive correlation between violence in battle on the one hand and the Bacchic violence of the women on the other is not coincidental. Quite the contrary: this link is established already in Euripides' *Bacchae* (see my discussion in chapter 12:152–53) and highlights the infringement of women upon spheres to which they are traditionally denied access.

The important linkage between Rome's foundation and women-only rituals is rendered explicit in the episode's deep intertextual engagement with Vergil's *Aeneid*. Scholars have noted the rich allusive material Ovid recasts

to suit his own poetic goals. On the one hand, the Ausonian maenads and the reference to fake Bacchic rites point us to *Aeneid* 7 and the destructive nature of Amata's Bacchic rites, incited by Juno's minion, Allecto, and which give rise to the violent conflict between the Trojans and the Latins. Furthermore, Juno's speech to the maenads alludes to another episode where women engage in collective religious action: in *Aeneid* 5, where Juno/Beroe persuades the women to transform their mourning ritual to (implicit) Bacchic frenzy, leading to the burning of the Trojan fleet and threatening the completion of Aeneas' mission.[24]

The foundational overtones of this episode, firmly established through the Vergilian intertext, are strengthened through the women's alignment with the *Aeneid's* Arcadians, and Evander in particular. As scholars have noted, Ino's arrival in Latium is analogous to Aeneas' encounter with Evander and the Arcadians (Fantham 1992b, Parker 1999). The Tiber is a significant shared element in both Vergil's and Ovid's narratives: Aeneas sails through the river to land in Latium, while Ino and her child find protection in the river's waters (6.501–02). The guidance Tiberinus offers Aeneas underscores the link of the native Italian element to the city's Roman future (8.36–65). In Ovid, the Tiber's nymphs rescue Ino and her child, while the river's peaceful waters (*placido lapsu per sua regna ferunt* [gently flowing, they carry them through their realms], 6.504) provide protection from harm (*illaesos,* 6.503).

The figures of Evander and Hercules are vital in *Aeneid* 8's articulation of the links between the beginnings of Rome and the new beginnings that Aeneas and, by extension, Augustus will launch. As we saw in chapter 14, Hercules, the civilizer par excellence, triumphant after his victory over the monstrous Cacus, founded the Ara Maxima in the Forum Boarium near the Aventine, a permanent monument celebrating the triumph of civilization over the forces of darkness. Evander's commemoration of the event through ritual provides the link between the mythical and historical times. Ovid creates intertextual contact with Vergil's Hercules episode through the incorporation of Ino's rescue by the passing Hercules. Yet he recasts it in order to shift the focus from the men (Hercules and Evander) to the women (Ino and Carmentis). Although, as we have seen, Ovid's Bacchants mention that Evander is the leader of this land (6.506), his role in the episode is marginal and appears to serve as an intertextual footnote to the *Aeneid*.[25] In Ovid, Evander's mother, Carmentis, offers hospitality to Ino and provides information regarding future ritual practice, as is appropriate in an etiology of a female cult. The national, political, and foundational nature of this moment in Ovid

is further emphasized by allusions to the exchanges between the Sibyl and Aeneas in *Aeneid* 6.[26] Thus Ovid transforms this foundational moment from one involving only men to one involving only women. Moreover, as Aeneas arrives in the middle of rites that exclude women,[27] so Ino's Roman experiences take place within the framework of religious activity that is restricted to women.

Hercules and the Mothers

Hercules is another point of interest in this foundation story, and one that further ties female cult to politics and history in a stark and impressive manner. In both Greek and Roman myth, Hercules, Ino, and Aeneas are all innocent victims of Juno's jealousy and hatred. Hercules and Ino in particular were driven by madness to kill their own children. In an effort to expiate their guilt, each of them came to Italy, where their paths intersect in the Forum Boarium, the location of the cults of Mater Matuta and of Hercules. Hercules' address to Ino emphasizes their common predicament:"

> "quid petis hinc," (cognorat enim) "matertera Bacchi?
> an numen, quod me, te quoque uexat?" ait. (6.523–24)
>
> He said, "What do you seek here, maternal aunt of Bacchus? (For he recognized her.) Perhaps the same deity that torments me torments you also?"

As Littlewood (2006: 162–63) observes, the word order of this pentameter points to Hercules and Ino's shared misfortune: "the juxtaposed *me te*, euphoniously framed by *quod . . . quoque*, stand between the subject (*numen*) and verb (*uexat*). Hercules' heavy admission of his unnatural crime is conveyed by ponderous spondees in the first half of the line." In Ovid's narrative, the hero emerges as protector of Ino and, as such, a figure aligned with the female. This alignment is also indicated by his leading a herd of Spanish cows (*uaccas . . . Hiberas*, 6.519), a reference contrasting with Vergil's narrative, where he is presented as returning from his triumph over Geryon and as a master of male oxen (*taurosque . . . / ingentis, . . . boues*; Verg. *A*. 8.203–04);[28] even Propertius (4.9.37–50), who (as noted in the previous chapter) mentions the vast geographical expanse of his labors. The analogies Hercules draws between himself and Ino place additional importance on her function as a foundational figure. Hercules' support and help in this instance parallel the Vergilian association of Hercules with the early history of Rome

in the person of Aeneas, as well as with its continuation in the person of Augustus. Hercules' role as a helper of Ino rather than as protagonist, his respectful, even deferential address to her as *matertera Bacchi*, and the immediate return of the narrative's focus back to Ino as soon as his intervention is successful enhance the episode's political and civic overtones.

The close relationship between Ino and Hercules presented here can also be attested in the topography of the Aventine, where, as we have seen, the temples of Mater Matuta and Fortuna are located in the vicinity of a complex of temples of Hercules in the Forum Boarium.[29] Smith (2000: 145) posits that the proximity of the temples of Mater Matuta, Fortuna, and Hercules showcases the complementarity of the male world of military success and the importance of motherhood and children for civic welfare, or that it spatially represents both individual and communal achievement.

Scholars have analyzed the iconography of these temples as representing a struggle between a hero and a symbol of destruction.[30] Experts believe that all images contribute "to a civic outcome, in which the community achieves order and perpetuation" (Smith 2000: 144). Although we cannot possibly pin down the entire range of meanings available to the worshippers for reflection and interpretation, the simultaneous presence of Hercules, Mater Matuta, and Fortuna in the Forum Boarium points to a complex set of associations among these deities and their areas of influence. A similar set of associations is reflected in Ovid's narrative.

Ovid thus rewrites both Vergil's and Propertius' foundational narratives by replacing a patrilineal foundation story with one that is almost exclusively matrilineal. As we have mentioned, Hercules' appearance is brief, and the foundation of the Ara Maxima is not mentioned, although it is the major event that occurred while the hero was in that location.[31] Women's rituals are key to understanding this shift. The Bacchic rites of the Ausonian maenads are a case in point: the Latian mothers share the violence of their Vergilian counterparts. In Ovid, their violent action occurs in what will eventually be Roman soil, the grove of Stimula. While in the *Aeneid* maenadism encroaches upon the male realm of warfare, here the women are violent because of their desire for infanticide: they seek to harm Ino's son (*puerumque reuellere pugnant*, 6.515). The destructive madness of the Bacchants, though it can be detrimental to the nascent state, is eventually transformed (admittedly with Hercules' help) to a moment of nation building. *Rumor* is instrumental in that regard, as it moves the narrative forward to the encounter of Ino with Carmentis:[32]

> Rumor, ut est uelox, agitatis peruolat alis,
> estque frequens, Ino, nomen in ore tuum.
> hospita Carmentis fidos intrasse penates
> diceris et longam deposuisse famem. (6.527–30)
>
> Rumor, as it is swift, flies about beating its wings, and your name, Ino, is on the lips of many. They say you entered as a guest the trusted household of Carmentis and assuaged your long hunger.

In the *Aeneid*, Fama/Rumor is a deity whose activity is often described in Bacchic terms (e.g. *A*. 4.666).[33] She is also described as an agent through which the women's Bacchic violence spreads to the realm of male warfare (*A*. 7.104–05, 392).[34] In Ovid, Rumor bears no trace of this Bacchic past; instead she neutralizes all destructive aspects of the collective female action (and of Juno, who mobilizes it). Rumor here spreads the story of Carmentis' successful hospitality and Ino's ultimate protection of mothers and children within the framework of women's cult. Rumor is thus an agent that propagates knowledge regarding positive social and religious relationships among women, first within the context of hospitality (notice the use of terms *hospita*, *fidos*, *longam deposuisse famem*) and then within the context of cult, by reporting on the baking of the cakes, providing an etiology for cult practices that occur during the Matralia (6.531–33). Furthermore, the text emphasizes Ino's character as a constructive agent, even though she herself had exhibited potentially destructive Bacchic qualities: Carmentis calls her propitious and beneficial to the people (*huic populo prospera semper ades* [may you always appear propitious to this people], 6.542; *ite, precor, nostris aequus uterque locis* [go, I pray, both be kindly to our lands], 6.548), and Ino promises to be so (*adnuerat, promissa fides* [she assented, she gave her promise], 6.549). Once again, women's rituals enable female agency that is positive and beneficial to the community at large.

Founding Mothers

Another important attribute of this matrilineal foundation story is the neutralization of violence as seen in the Roman Bacchants, and the blending of different elements that are at once Greek, Italian, and Roman. Ino's Greek heritage is assimilated by Rome, as she is transformed from Ino to Leucothea to Mater Matuta. The son's identity follows a similar trajectory, from Melicertes to Palaemon and eventually Portunus. The threefold changing of the names also emphasizes that transformation is a process with different issues

and problems at each stage. The figures' Greek, mortal names are succeeded by new names denoting their liminality (as they both are between life and death in Tiber's waters) and are eventually replaced by Roman names, showing that their incorporation into the new state is now complete.

By contrast, Hercules' geographical exploits are restricted to the west (Spain: *uaccas . . . Hiberas*, 6.519), and his contribution to the foundation of Rome is completely erased, at least in this episode. Ino's readiness and ability to extend her protection to the Roman people demonstrate that female cult offers inclusiveness and peaceful coexistence, and thus contrasts sharply with the narratives of violence and (civil) war in the *Aeneid*. Read in this way, the importance of the story for the book's closing reference to the dedication of the temple of Concordia, and Livia's role therein, becomes apparent.[35] Women's rituals are thus connected with the state's early history in such a way as to provide an alternative to the violence associated with Aeneas in Vergil. Women emerge as foundational agents and their religious activity as a constructive force that offers a version preferable to the male foundation story, which is fraught with violence and aggression.

Hospitality is an important element that helps establish yet another contrast between women and men. In her speech to the Latian Bacchants, Juno falsely depicts Ino as betraying the laws of hospitality and reciprocal friendship and convinces them to use infanticide as punishment, as we have seen (6.509–12). Juno's ultimately unsuccessful attempt to use Ino's purported violation of hospitality contrasts both with the success that she had in the *Aeneid* (where she managed to break the guest-friendship between Latinus and Aeneas) and with the reciprocity between Ino and Carmentis at the conclusion of the story (6.535–36; 542). There, Ino returns Carmentis' favors of shelter and friendship with a promise of permanent benefits bestowed upon her host and her people (6.549).[36] In this respect, hospitality among women has a completely different outcome from what occurs in Vergil's epic.[37] Early in *Aeneid* 8, Evander offers a long speech to Aeneas tracing the bond of guest-friendship between their two families (*A.* 8.154–74) and entrusts his son, Pallas, to Aeneas to train him in the battlefield (*A.* 8.513–19).[38] Yet some of the most important and violent episodes subsequently occur because of Aeneas' inability to carry out his share of responsibility toward his host (*A.* 10.515–17). During the ensuing war, Pallas' death, cast as a breach of Aeneas' obligations of guest-friendship, weighs heavily upon the hero, causing him to go on a killing rampage,[39] which will culminate in the poem's final, and foundational, act, the killing of Turnus.[40] By contrast, the women in Ovid's

narrative are far more successful than the men, even though Juno temporarily uses the bonds of hospitality as a means of provoking destruction.

In addition, metapoetic concerns, similar to those we have seen in Propertius in the previous chapter, also have a share in the episode's foundational agenda.[41] Hercules again emerges as a pivotal figure through which poets at once affirm and contest the conventional boundaries of genres. As Propertius before him, so Ovid uses the Hellenistic, elegiac Hercules as a foil to the hero's epic counterpart and shows him a more flexible figure than he is in other genres. The etiological narrative makes the *Fasti*, with its Callimachean heritage and its equal accommodation of elegiac tropes and epic concerns, emerge as a work that is far more inclusive and flexible than (and much preferable to) the traditional foundational narratives in Latin hexameters. I would suggest that the representations of women's rituals contribute to the articulation of this flexibility, which is closely linked to the ideological content of the poem and its relationship to the Augustan regime. The women thus emerge as an alternative authority, replacing the Vergilian authority figures aligned with the *princeps*, such as Hercules, Aeneas, and Evander. Moreover, as we have seen in other instances, Ovid uses women's religious roles to explore tensions between genres, especially between epic and elegy. By using women's rituals as an alternative foundation story for Rome, Ovid here expands the scope of his elegiac *Fasti*, engaging with issues that hitherto have been the domain of epic.

The women's story is not devoid of troubling elements: Ino's plight involves infanticide, madness, and violence. Violence is indeed a part of women's history. It is associated with Ino's Greek past[42] but, as we have seen, also takes place on Roman soil, even though Ino eventually finds asylum there.[43] Scholars have called attention to other disturbing elements. Newlands (2000: 192) argues that "Ino is inserted in a discourse that centers the powers of the irrational upon the women" and that the dual aspect of Ino's portrayal—as both evil queen and benevolent deity—makes her an ambiguous model of feminine authority for the imperial era (2000: 200). For Newlands, women are ultimately unstable and even politically dangerous.

Similarly, the suitability of Hercules as a helper of Ino at this moment has also been questioned. Littlewood (2006: 162) suggests that the use of the epithet *Oetaeus* to identify him here (6.519) serves as a reminder of his tragic death, while Newlands argues (1995: 230) that Hercules' Hellenistic identity as a womanizer is not appropriate in a panegyric of female chastity and is thus subversive in a discourse of female praise. I would add that, although

Hercules does not use violence (since his sight is enough to terrify the Bacchants and turn them to flight), his mere presence implies the threat of aggression towards women, another element of male violence invading the feminine realm. Moreover, the text's rather abrupt transition from Ino's story to the etiology of the Matralia through the intervention of Rumor—devoid of further details of Hercules' and Ino's exchange or of how Ino ends up at Carmentis' house—shows that Ino's own transition to a Roman deity is not seamless. In other words, the narrator tells us that all ended well rather than dramatizing how it all played out.

The purpose of my analysis is not to deny that problematic elements exist in Ovid's foundational narrative. Rather, my aim is to point out the ways in which women's rituals, even as they contain troubling elements, present an alternative, peaceful, narrative to the male foundation story of war and violence. In Ovid's *Fasti* 6.473–648 (as in Propertius 4.9), women's rituals do not simply complement the male story but replace it. Through their engagement with cult, the women emerge as agents of Rome's foundation, offering incorporation, inclusion, and the transformation of violence into cohesion, stability, and continuity. Ovid's rewriting of the Vergilian foundation story shows women's rituals as capable of containing the potential for violence inherent in all human action. The commemoration of these events through ritual aims, not at completely eliminating such anxieties, but at presenting the possibility of their control through the continuous performance of ritual. The celebration of the festival of Mater Matuta ensures that the positive ideals of maternity and fertility receive their proper due in the public life of the city. In this respect, the women in Ovid are revealed as much more capable of success than their male counterparts in Vergil's *Aeneid*, where Evander's ritual commemoration of Hercules' victory prefigures Aeneas' war in Latium.

Ovid's engagement with women's rituals in this context could be seen as exalting the contributions of women in the civic realm and thus paying homage to the Augustan ideological program regarding marriage and families. The return to the city's early beginnings endows his narrative with an authentic voice and presents his version of history as deeply embedded in a revered mythic past. At the same time, the privileging of women as agents of Rome's foundation runs against the narratives of Roman history that Ovid seeks to emulate, as their protagonists are almost exclusively men. Ovid's metapoetic agenda for the *Fasti* certainly includes challenging the boundaries of genres (epic and elegy) and the canonical status of previous narratives (Vergil's *Aeneid*). But the literary concerns are not devoid of political meaning.

The privileging of Ino and Carmentis as founders of Rome suggests that the importance of recognizing the positive contributions of *matronae* to the Roman state. Such privileging may well be in accordance with Augustus' moral reform. But as we have seen in previous chapters, another reason may perhaps lie in an identification Roman elite men may have felt with female characters in the face of an increasingly authoritarian regime under the Principate. The existence of troubling aspects in the women's activity adds a further layer of complexity to the poem's ideological fabric and demonstrates the difficulties surrounding this new foundational proposition. Regardless of what one may decide about the problems of polyphony in this complex poem, this episode once again links women's rituals with female agency and public life. In proposing an alternative foundational narrative, it both champions the traditional Roman values of peace, fertility, and family and suggests that women offer an important, if not uncomplicated, model of inclusivity, stability, and prosperity for the new imperial era.

Dancing in Scyros

Masculinity and Young Women's Rituals in Statius' *Achilleid*

Moving away from public women's festivals and their positive contributions to the Roman state, this chapter explores the impact of young women's rituals on Roman consciousness and examines a narrative that shows the collective performance of virginity as able to destabilize masculinity.

The surviving first book of Statius' *Achilleid* describes Achilles' youth and presents him in the remote island of Scyros, wearing a dress and confined to the company of young women. Scholars have identified Achilles' stint in Scyros as part of a larger narrative strategy dramatizing his transition from adolescent boy to adult warrior.[1] Shifting the focus of analysis from Achilles to the rituals of the girls of Scyros, I argue that female ritual activity is used to express and emphasize female agency and power. The performance of rituals, especially dances, serves as a marker of the power of the girls' sexuality and desirability. Their association with the Amazons in this context also enhances their portrayal as resistant of traditional gender roles and hierarchies. The girls' power, however, does not appear to threaten the essence of masculinity: Achilles is represented as a male through a repeated narrative focus on his tremendous physicality. Nevertheless, the girls' ritual dance performance succeeds in manipulating and even thwarting the manifestation of Achilles' bursting masculinity, and by extension its successful correlation with martial prowess, an important indicator of true manliness.

In the *Achilleid*, Statius once again uses ritual activity in literature as a marker of gender (see chapter 6 and 9). Ephebic rituals provide girls with the necessary preparation for their religious duties, domestic and civic, which they will be performing throughout their lives as wives and mothers (Dillon 2002: 4). These rituals constitute a medium for inculcating some aspects of female socialization while containing and controlling emerging female sexuality. Religious activities also offer the girls opportunities for

social participation, which brings them into contact with men. This entails risks for the preservation of their chastity and threatens to upset social protocols, which demand that the husband be the sole proprietor of a woman's sexual abilities and powers. For example, in the *Achilleid*, as in other genres and in comedy in particular, religious festivals afford opportunities for respectable girls to get into trouble.[2]

Statius' *Achilleid* (1.285–92) first presents the girls as a group making offerings to Pallas of the Beach (*Palladi litoreae*, 1.285). When a little later in the narrative Thetis asks Lycomedes to accept Achilles as his ward, she provides a description of the appropriate activities that will keep Achilles, who is now metamorphosed into a girl, "in her sex" (*sexu . . . tene*, 1.356), effectively arguing that gender is constructed through a repeated series of performative actions and not simply through biology (Butler 1999). Indeed, the poem repeatedly confirms this notion by pitting Achilles' overwhelming physicality against the girls' ritual performance and having the latter overpower it every time.

The girls are themselves depicted as doing their own gender bending, inasmuch as they are consistently portrayed through references to the Amazons (1.353, 1.760, 1.833). Amazons are the quintessential emblem of female power, so these references underscore the girls' agency through their participation in and performance of religious duties. Furthermore, by making the girls engage in rites that are mostly Bacchic, Statius reinforces the theme of gender-bending, as maenadism routinely involves negation of social protocols.[3]

In the *Achilleid*, then, the girls' role underscores the rather modern notion that masculinity is constructed and performed socially; it is not simply determined through biology. Achilles' physicality and male-oriented education are introduced early on in the poem and are never truly endangered in Scyros. Quite the opposite: Achilles manages to impregnate Deidamia, an act that proclaims his masculinity. But he is repeatedly hidden by the dancing girls. The poem thus shows female ritual activity as capable of containing (or at least delaying) even an overwhelming physicality such as Achilles' and of obstructing the performance of gender.[4]

In what follows, I shall argue that the girls' power and agency are indicated through three main areas: the power of their beauty and sexuality to attract and potentially dominate men; their association with Amazons; and their performance of Bacchic rituals. An analysis of these narrative strategies demonstrates that Statius puts traditional and typical motifs surround-

ing women's activities to unique and interesting use, investing them with exceptional power and agency that appears capable of posing a real threat to the full articulation of masculinity.

Gender as Performance

Statius' constructionist view of gender as performance is vividly outlined in Thetis' speech to King Lycomedes as she seeks to convince him to take Achilles in his custody:

> "hanc tibi," ait, "nostri germanam, rector, Achillis
> (nonne uides ut torua genas aequandaque fratri?)
> tradimus. arma umeris arcumque animosa petebat
> ferre et Amazonio conubia pellere ritu.
> sed mihi curarum satis est pro stirpe uirili;
> haec calathos et sacra ferat, tu frange regendo
> indocilem sexuque tene, dum nubilis aetas
> soluendusque pudor; neue exercere proteruas
> gymnadas aut lustris nemorum concede uagari.
> intus ale et similes inter seclude puellas." (1.350–59)

> She says, "King, I'm handing over this girl to you, Achilles' sister—don't you see how fierce her gaze is and just like her brother's? She's a feisty one; she wanted to carry weapons and a bow on her shoulders and to reject marriage, like the Amazons. But I have enough to worry about with my son. Let her carry baskets and sacred objects; tame the unruly girl by training her, and keep her in her sex, until she is ready to marry and ease her modesty; do not let her practice in licentious athletic races or wander in the wooded groves; raise her inside and keep her secluded among other girls like her."

Thetis enumerates the activities of girls of premarital age: one of their duties was to carry various "religious items" (*sacra*) needed for cult rituals and baskets in particular. "Girls bearing baskets," (κανηφόροι) are mentioned in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* (641–46), where a young Athenian girl's ritual duties are enumerated; this then becomes a *topos* in the literature and iconography of young girls, like dancing and singing. The girls in Lycomedes' court engage in all these activities. In his monograph on the religious roles of classical Greek girls and women, Matthew Dillon rightly posits: "These roles were open to girls and adolescent women partly because as they were unmarried they had no other responsibilities; once married, public roles

such as these, particularly in a city such as Athens, were presumably thought inappropriate for them as wives of Athenian citizens. But the virgin status of girls must have been a factor in their filling these roles: in serving as attendants bringing the sacrificial items, their purity was doubtless important."[5] Not only is their purity significant, but also, I would add, it is reinforced and emphasized in textual and visual representations.

The tension between "nature" versus "culture," or between the essence and performance of gender, is also revealed in Thetis' emphasis on safeguarding the chastity and virginity of Achilles-as-a-girl. This tension is expressed in terms that typically describe girls of premarital age in Greek and Roman literature: as inherently wild and in need of taming (*frange regendo*; *indocilis*). Marriage is, of course, the medium through which this taming will take place and which will ensure their complete integration in society as wives and mothers.[6] Thetis portrays the performance of ritual duty as constitutive of this containment of Achilles-as-a-girl's wild nature in that both these strategies will "keep her in her sex" (*sexu . . . tene*) until marriage. The goddess's remarks, however, reveal some of the tensions within those ritual activities: she refers to them as *gymnadas*, a word first attested in Statius,[7] and one that describes athletic contests of various sorts, including wrestling (which may be perceived as more appropriate for adolescent boys) as well as boxing or racing; it could be also describing the contestants collectively.[8] To be sure, athletic contests were important in various cult activities of young girls, especially in Sparta.[9] Yet evidence exists of what are believed to be mock ritual races in Attica that involve nudity, in the context of the ritual of Arkteia (she-bears) for Artemis at Brauron (Dillon 2002: 220–21, see also chapter 12:158). Such activities pose risks for the girls' chastity, as is obvious from Thetis' use of the adjective *proteruas* ("impudent," "shameless," "forward;" OLD s.v.2) to describe them and her injunction to Lycomedes not to allow them to tend to such practices (*neue exercere . . . concede*).[10]

The performance of specific roles as determinant of sex surfaces again in the "courting" scene between Achilles and Deidamia:

> nunc nimius lateri non euitantis inhaeret,
> nunc leuibus sertis, lapsis nunc sponte canistris,
> nunc thyrso parcente ferit, modo dulcia notae
> fila lyrae tenuesque modos et carmina monstrat
> Chironis ducitque manum digitosque sonanti
> infringit citharae, nunc occupat ora canentis

et ligat amplexus et mille per oscula laudat.
illa libens discit, quo uertice Pelion, et quis
Aeacides, puerique auditum nomen et actus
assidue stupet et praesentem cantat Achillem.
ipsa quoque et ualidos proferre modestius artus
et tenuare rudes attrito pollice lanas
demonstrat reficitque colos et perdita dura
pensa manu. (1.570–83)

Now he clings too closely to her side, and she does not avoid him, now he hits her with light garlands, now with baskets that have fallen down on purpose, now with a harmless thyrsus. He shows her the sweet strings of the lyre he knows well, the slender measures, and Chiron's songs; he guides her hand and fingers to play the melodious cithara, now he steals a kiss while she sings, holds her in his arms tight, and praises her with a thousand kisses. Eagerly she learns, what peak is Pelion, who is the son of Aeacus, again and again she's amazed to hear the young man's name and deeds and sings of Achilles to his face. She, too, shows him how to move his brawny limbs and to draw out the rough wool by rubbing it with his thumb, and fixes the distaff and the wool that his burly hand had ruined.

Once again the ritual setting (in the midst of garlands, baskets, and a Bacchic *thyrsus*) is exploited by the poet to showcase Deidamia teaching Achilles the feminine activities of dancing and handling the wool, while he introduces her to the more "masculine" pursuits of singing (epic) and playing the cithara.[11] But the contrast between Achilles' and Deidamia's abilities to carry out their respective activities is also remarkable: while Deidamia's singing appears to be so good as to inspire ever greater displays of affection on the part of Achilles, he himself appears to be not very good at them and in need of her help (*reficitque colos et perdita dura / pensa manu*).[12] This inability of Achilles to perform convincingly as a woman will be a problem throughout his appearances as a girl in the book, while, by contrast, Deidamia's masculine attributes are a constitutive part of the construction of her identity.

Virginity and Sexuality

The dangerous potential of the combination of virginity and wild sexuality (to which Thetis' requests to Lycomedes allude) proves a source of empowerment for the girls, which they successfully manipulate throughout the first book of the poem. In Greek and Roman thought, virginity exudes a strong

sexual appeal that has great potency over the male, as is obvious in the first appearance of the girls of Scyros in the *Achilleid*:

> omnibus eximium formae decus, omnibus idem
> cultus et expleto teneri iam fine pudoris
> uirginitas matura toris annique tumentes. (1.290–92)
>
> They all had extraordinary beauty, and all had the same outfit; and having already reached the end of their tender modesty, their virginity and their blossoming years were ready for the marriage bed.

The girls' exit from the domestic to the public space of the temple of Pallas of the Beach reveals their beauty, which in the text is directly linked to their *pudor*, *uirginitas*, and readiness for marriage (*toris annique tumentes*). The powerful sexual appeal of these qualities for the men who are in the "audience," as it were, is underscored by the following double simile likening Deidamia and the girls to Venus, the sea nymphs, Diana, and the Naiads (1.293–300). In addition to the obviously sexual connotations of the reference to Venus, Diana's sexual magnetism is also conveyed through this image, as it recalls the setting of her heavily eroticized encounter with Actaeon in Ovid (*Met*. 3.165–205). Moreover, the allusions of the passage to Vergil's Dido (*A*. 1.498–504) only serve to intensify the attraction of Achilles, whose falling for Deidamia thus emerges as almost predetermined.[13] To be sure, the greatest effect of the sexual power of the girls, and Deidamia in particular, is Achilles' reaction, which is described as feminizing him both figuratively, in the scene of his blushing, and literally, in that he subsequently agrees to be dressed as a woman:[14]

> hanc ubi ducentem longe socia agmina uidit,
> trux puer et nullo temeratus pectora motu
> deriguit totisque nouum bibit ossibus ignem.
> nec latet haustus amor, sed fax uibrata medullis
> in uultus atque ora redit lucemque genarum
> tinguit et inpulsam tenui sudore pererrat. (1.302–06)
>
> When he saw her from afar leading the line of her companions, the ferocious young man, whose heart had never been wounded by emotion, grew stiff and drank the new flame deep into his bones. Nor can this draught of love stay hidden, but the torch brandishing inside him goes to his face and expression, tinges the brilliance of his cheeks, and wanders over, pulsating with a light sweat.

Furthermore, the same power of the dancing girls of premarital age over the men receives elaborate attention in the exchanges between Ulysses and Lycomedes, where once again ritual performance is described as enhancing the girls' desirability:

> "carisque para conubia natis,
> quas tibi sidereis diuarum uultibus aequas
> Fors dedit. ut me olim tacitum reuerentia tangit!
> is decor et formae species permixta uirili."
> occurrit genitor: "Quid si aut Bacchegoddess ferentes
> orgia, Palladias aut circum uideris aras?
> et dabimus, si forte nouus cunctabitur Auster."
> excipiunt cupidi et tacitis spes addita uotis. (1.807–15).

> [Ulysses speaking:] "And prepare weddings for your dear daughters, whom Fortune has given to you, their faces as dazzling as those of the goddesses. How sometimes reverence renders me silent! What charm and beauty with a tinge of manly countenance!" The father replies: "What if you should see them bearing Bacchus' sacred objects or around Pallas' altar? And I will allow you to see, if by chance a new south wind shall delay you." They eagerly take him up and hope joins their silent prayers.

Ulysses' praise of Lycomedes' daughters reveals that their dance (1.755–60) has attested to their beauty and suitability as brides.[15] Lycomedes responds that their virtues would become even more apparent if the guests saw them perform ritual duties, and then proposes to allow his guests to witness them, revealing his desire to secure perhaps one of his guests as a spouse.[16] The eagerness of Ulysses and Diomedes to agree to such a viewing (1.819–20) also testifies to the pleasure that the spectacle of the girls' ritual performance provides to the male viewing audience, even as, in terms of the plot, it ostensibly gives them another chance to detect Achilles.

Girl Power: Amazons and Pallas

The power that the girls of Scyros exert through their performance of ritual acts, and dancing in particular, may help shed light on their consistent connection to Amazons in all three of their "public" appearances in the *Achilleid*. Each capitalizes on the previous one to express the girls' empowerment through the exercise of their religious duties.

As we have seen, the first Amazon reference occurs in the scene of Thetis' orders to Lycomedes. There her comparison of Achilles-as-a-girl to an Amazon is a convenient way to hide her son's masculinity from Lycomedes, and aptly encapsulates his crossing of gender boundaries. At the same time, Thetis' portrait of Achilles-as-a-girl is convincing precisely because it presents him as possessing a trait that, as we have already seen, is commonly associated with virgins and is exploited here with great irony: a virgin's wild, uncivilized nature, which resists marriage. The Amazon metaphor thus encapsulates the inherent tension between society's need to keep girls chaste, confined, and away from the presence of men on the one hand and their nature on the other, which both defies this confinement and relishes in it, as it offers a means of resisting male domination altogether.

The Amazons exemplify this tension, since they are transgressive women in both appearance and lifestyle and often pose a threat to men.[17] As such, they live on the fringes of civilization, thus embodying a menacing "other" that stirs in men the desire to conquer and tame them.[18] At the same time, Amazons are fierce and feared warriors. Thus they constitute the perfect medium for reflecting the power to which the girls lay claim in their public appearances:

> iamque atria feruent
> regali strepitu et picto discumbitur auro,
> cum pater ire iubet natas comitesque pudicas
> natarum. subeunt, quales Maeotide ripa,
> cum Scythicas rapuere domos et capta Getarum
> moenia, sepositis epulantur Amazones armis. (1.755–60)
>
> And now the halls bustle with royal racket, and the guests lie down on embroidered gold, when the father bids his daughters and his daughters' chaste companions to come in. They enter like Amazons on the Maeotian banks, when they feast with their weapons set aside, after they had plundered the Scythian homes and the captured towns of the Getae.[19]

The image of the Amazons feasting after a victorious battle emphasizes their "masculine" power and relates very well to the use of the Amazon metaphor in the previous passage to denote female resistance to marriage.[20] Once again, this metaphor showcases the sexual power of the girls over the men, who constitute the audience of the banquet, as well as the transgressive potential of their defiance of traditional gender roles. The emphasis on the girls' empowerment in this regard is reinforced by Deidamia's subsequent success-

ful concealment of Achilles' bursting masculinity from Ulysses' discerning gaze (1.767–71).[21] I will return to the idea of female power and the concealment of masculinity shortly, as it is also related to the poem's use of the girls' rituals and their engagement in Bacchic rites specifically.

The link between the girls' potential (or actual) empowerment and the power exerted by the Amazons is also reinforced through their connection with the goddess Pallas. In Greece, young girls, and especially κανηφόροι, become associated with rituals of Athena and Artemis, as I have already mentioned. Female offerings to Pallas are an epic *topos*, although it usually involves married women as well as girls during the time of war (Hom. *Il.* 6.297–311, Verg. *A.* 1.479–82 and 11.475–85; see also the discussion in chapter 12:162). In addition, the island of Scyros had been famously linked with Athens since the fifth century BCE, via the Theseus myth: Theseus is believed to have died on Scyros, and the Athenian general Cimon transferred the legendary hero's bones from Scyros to Athens, thus claiming a close connection between the city and the island and legitimizing Athenian interests in the area.[22] At the same time, there are other narrative reasons for the use of Pallas: as a virgin warrior, she is both an emblem of chastity and a formidable female presence; as such, she combines the attributes that Statius bestows on his girls. She is worshipped by the girls in a liminal place, the shore, the island's boundary, as we have seen above (*Palladi litoreae*, 1.285), while there is a statue of the goddess there too (*placidique super Tritonia custos/litoris*, [and Tritonia above, guardian of the tranquil shore], 1.696–97). As P. J. Heslin (2005: 237) correctly observes, "the virgin goddess presides, not without irony, over the arousal of Achilles' interest at his first sight of Deidamia: Pallas, the virgin goddess who guards the kingdom's boundary, will prove an ineffectual guardian of her ministrant's virginity."

Like the Amazons, Pallas is mentioned three times in the *Achilleid*: in the girls' first public appearance,[23] in Lycomedes' description of the maidens to Ulysses (1.813), and in the description of Achilles' and the girls' ritual performance (*feroxque/Pallas* 1.825–26). As Denis Feeney (2004: 89–91) notes, this last instance draws explicit parallels between Achilles and the first appearance of Deidamia in the epic, underscoring the feminization of the hero. At the same time, it provides yet another instance of the poem's systematic link between the girls' virginity and "masculinity." This connection has surfaced earlier, when Ulysses comments to Lycomedes that the girls' beauty has a masculine quality (*is decor et formae species permixta uirili*, 1.811). Aside from the obvious humor and irony, Ulysses' statement is congruent

with the depiction of the girls as possessing a sort of masculine agency and power. This agency and power over the male reaches its climax in their performance of Bacchic rituals, to which my discussion will now turn.

Maenadism and Sex

As we have repeatedly seen in this volume, maenadism in literature is synonymous with female negation of civilized values and resistance to the male, and Bacchic rituals are used to showcase female crossing of traditional gender boundaries, with disastrous results for men and women alike.[24] Since Bacchic rites are portrayed as means of female empowerment, it is not surprising to see them figure prominently in Statius' portrait of the girls of Scyros. In addition to their initial exit to the temple of Pallas, Bacchic rites are the main ritual activity the girls perform. Unlike many of his famous predecessors who had depicted Bacchic rites, Statius in the *Achilleid* manipulates the usual themes associated with maenadism—negation of marriage, resistance to the male, and crossing of gender boundaries—to display the power of femininity not only to encroach upon but to eclipse the performance of masculinity. In the *Achilleid*, as Achilles continuously threatens to expose his bursting manliness, the women's Bacchic rites are repeatedly effective in preventing him from doing so.

Achilles' physicality surfaces in all the descriptions of maenadic activity in the poem. We see it first in the Bacchic rite the women perform in the woods:[25]

illum uirgineae ducentem signa cateruae
magnaque difficili soluentem bracchia motu
(et sexus pariter decet et mendacia matris)
mirantur comites. nec iam pulcherrima turbae
Deidamia suae tantumque admota superbo
uincitur Aeacidae, quantum premit ipsa sorores.
ut uero e tereti demisit nebrida collo
errantesque sinus hedera collegit et alte
cinxit purpureis flauentia tempora uittis
uibrauitque graui redimitum missile dextra,
attonito stat turba metu sacrisque relictis
illum ambire libet pronosque attollere uultus.
talis, ubi ad Thebas uultumque animumque remisit
Euhius et patrio satiauit pectora luxu,

serta comis mitramque leuat thyrsumque uirentem
armat et hostiles inuisit fortior Indos. (1.603–18)

And his comrades admire him as he clumsily leads the standard of the virgins' troop and relaxes his great arms (his sex and his mother's lies are equally becoming). No longer is Deidamia the loveliest of her group, but proud Achilles eclipses her in beauty as much as she outshines her sisters. As he drops the fawn skin from his smooth neck, pulls together the slipping folds with ivy, decorates his golden hair with purple garlands, and brandishes the wreathed weapon with his heavy right hand, the band of virgins stand astonished with fear and, abandoning the sacred objects, wish to gather around him and lift up their downcast gaze. Like Bacchus, after he has relaxed his expression and his spirit at Thebes and satisfied his heart with his homeland's luxury, he lifts the garlands and the cap from his locks, arms the green thyrsus, and visits his enemies in India, more valiant than before.

Achilles' description provokes humor for the reader (as he dances *difficili . . . motu*), but he inspires fear in the maidens: his size, together with the aggressiveness of his *thyrsus*, cause them to be amazed and afraid (*attonito stat turba metu*) and to abandon their rites. The fearsome image of Achilles is intensified by the military language used to describe his size (*uincitur*) and the *thyrsus* as weapon (*missile*). Although a staple in maenadic descriptions and indicative of the women's transgressive actions (see chapters 7:97–101, 12:150–51), military language is here put to use to convey the potency of masculinity. The subsequent comparison of Achilles to Dionysus continues and reinforces this theme. The god's power is once again stressed through military language (*armat*, *hostiles*, *fortior*), even as he is presented in nonthreatening or effeminate terms (*uultumque animumque remisit*; *patrio satiauit pectora luxu*), foreshadowing the rape of Deidamia that follows.[26]

Yet Achilles' powerful masculinity meets its match twice in the course of Bacchic rites, first during the rape of Deidamia and then in the court of Lycomedes. Deidamia's rape occurs in the context of maenadic activity:

. . . densa noctis gauisus in umbra
tempestiua suis torpere silentia furtis
ui potitur uotis et toto pectore ueros
admouet amplexus; uidit chorus omnis ab alto
astrorum et tenerae rubuerunt cornua Lunae.
illa quidem clamore nemus montemque repleuit;

sed Bacchi comites, discussa nube soporis,
signa choris indicta putant; fragor undique notus
tollitur, et thyrsos iterum uibrabat Achilles. (1.640–48)

. . . [Achilles] rejoicing that in the thick darkness of the night the silence's stillness is convenient for his theft. He violently possesses the object of his wishes, and he gives her a real embrace with his whole heart. The entire chorus of the stars saw it from on high, and the slender horns of the moon blushed. Indeed the girl filled the grove and the mountains with her cries; but Bacchus' companions, having shaken the cloud of sleep, think it is the signal for the dances they had agreed upon; all around they raise a familiar ruckus and once again Achilles was brandishing the thyrsus.

Achilles' rape of Deidamia is described in no uncertain terms as violent (*ui potitur*), while her resistance is vividly noted. P. J. Heslin (2005: 253–55) interprets the rape as a symbolic etiology (humorous or serious) of the ritual unveiling of the phallus, which presumably took place during Bacchic rites. I, however, argue that in this passage the opposite occurs, as once again the exposure of Achilles' masculine power is thwarted. As the rape takes place, Deidamia's cries merge with the other girls' ritual clamor and Achilles-as-a-girl is shown to participate in the ritual by brandishing the thyrsus and by resuming the orgiastic activity in the context of the ritual. As Deidamia's pregnancy is subsequently hidden, so Achilles' male identity remains hidden within the *thiasos* of the Bacchants, who misconstrue the rape as a sign for celebrations to commence anew.[27] Thus within the maenadic context the girls emerge as capable of controlling the manifestation of manliness, if not its essence or physicality, while the poet underscores the fallibility of the chorus in its maenadic state of mind.

Bacchic rites have a similar function at the court of Lycomedes, where Deidamia successfully hides Achilles during the banquet (1.802–05) and during the girls' ritual dance:[28]

nec minus egressae thalamo Scyreides ibant
ostentare choros promissaque sacra uerendis
hospitibus. nitet ante alias regina comesque
Pelides: qualis Siculae sub rupibus Aetnae
Naidas Ennaeas inter Diana feroxque
Pallas et Elysii lucebat sponsa tyranni.
iamque mouent gressus thiasisque Ismenia buxus

signa dedit, quater aera Rheae, quater enthea pulsant
terga manu uariosque quater legere recursus.
tunc thyrsos pariterque leuant pariterque reponunt
multiplicantque gradum, modo quo Curetes in actu
quoque pii Samothraces eunt, nunc obuia uersae
pectine Amazonio, modo quo citat orbe Lacaenas
Delia plaudentesque suis intorquet Amyclis.
tunc uero, tunc praecipue manifestus Achilles
nec seruare uices nec bracchia iungere curat;
tunc molles gressus, tunc aspernatur amictus
plus solito rumpitque choros et plurima turbat.
sic indignantem thyrsos acceptaque matris
tympana iam tristes spectabant Penthea Thebae. (1.821–40)

No less did the maidens of Scyros, having left their chamber, go to show their dances and the solemn rites promised to the esteemed guests. The queen and her companion, Peleus' son, sparkle the most among them; just like under the rocks of Sicilian Aetna Diana gleams among the Naiads of Henna, or fierce Pallas, or the bride of the Elysian king. Now the girls begin their steps and the Theban flute gives the signal for the dance. Four times they beat with their hands Rhea's cymbals, four times the frenzied drums, four times they retrace their winding steps. Then they all together lift, and all together lower their thyrsi, and increase their speed, just like the Curetes or the pious Samothracians move; now they turn to face each other in an Amazonian comb, now in the way Diana in her own Amyclae rouses the Spartan girls to form a circle and spins them as they clap. Then, indeed then, Achilles was particularly obvious. He didn't take care to keep his turn or to join hands; then he scorned the gentle steps and soft clothing, and disrupted the chorus more than usual, causing great confusion. In the same way Thebes, already sad, had watched Pentheus disdain the *thyrsi* and the drums that his mother had embraced.

As in other Bacchic narratives, here we encounter a mixture of ritual elements. The maidens' ritual dance (*sacra*) is explicitly Bacchic: the girls form a *thiasos*, the signal is given with the Ismenian boxwood (*Ismenia buxus*), that is, the Theban flute used by Bacchants, and the maenads brandish the thyrsus as they dance. Furthermore, Statius' conflation of various mystery rites in this description is actually typical of such narratives (e.g. Eur. *Ba*. 73–87 and 120–34). He specifically includes the rites of Rhea/Magna Mater, those of the Curetes, and the mysteries of Samothrace, among others, creating a

mosaic of exotic and transgressive behavior.[29] Finally, the role of Achilles and Deidamia as protagonists is emphasized by the special mention of their position in the *thiasos* (*nitet ante alias regina comesque/Pelides*), another common motif that accompanies descriptions of the leader of Bacchic rites (e.g. E. *Ba.* 681–82 and 689–91, Verg. *A.* 7.396–400). Statius' faithful adherence to the protocols of maenadic portrayal reveals that Achilles successfully fulfills the role of a Bacchant.

The delay in the exposure of Achilles' masculinity, even as he fails equally miserably to dance as a girl, is of paramount importance. The comic elements of the scene do not obscure the reality of the girls' power during the performance.[30] It is not a coincidence that the imagery that has so far accompanied them in the poem comes together in this scene, with Bacchus, Pallas, Diana, and the Amazons making appearances in the description of the dance.[31] Bacchic rites, whether they take place in the wild or in a domesticated space, afford the women the power to dominate the men, and, in this case, to prevent the performance of masculinity and its successful correlation with martial prowess. This interpretation also helps explain Achilles' puzzling comparison to Pentheus: just as the Theban prince is ultimately conquered by the maenads, so Achilles' masculinity has been once again thwarted by the dancing girls of Scyros and contrasts neatly with his earlier likening to the powerful Dionysus.

To be sure, the girls are only temporarily successful. Achilles will eventually present himself as a man to Ulysses and will marry Deidamia, and the book will end with all the social roles falling into their normative place. Achilles-as-a-man will forego the feminizing (and elegiac) role of lover in order to assume that of the male (epic) warrior. Yet the exposure of his masculinity is itself rendered in feminine terms, as it occurs during the girls' excited perusal of their shiny gifts. The shield catches Achilles' attention mainly because of its brilliance (*radiantem . . . orbem*, 1.852 [the shining round]); note also the description of the shield as a mirror: *luxque aemula*, 1.864 [the rival radiance]), while the gore on it seems almost like an afterthought (*saeuis et forte rubebat/bellorum maculis*, 1.853–54 [and by chance it was ruddy with cruel spots of war]). The attraction to shiny, beautiful objects is of course a standard trait of women (e.g. Livy's Tarpeia 1.11.5–9) and can be treacherous for warriors (e.g. in Vergil's Camilla, *A.* 11.768–82, or Euryalus, *A.* 9.359–66). Achilles' attraction to the shield's glow is a reminder of his tragic fate in battle.[32] It is also a comment on the fragility of his masculinity.[33]

In the *Achilleid*, ritual activity is used to relate female power and agency to virginity, sexuality, and potential resistance to the male. Ritual renders the girls successful in thwarting, even only temporarily, Achilles' trajectory to fulfill his role of male warrior. In addition, the performance of ritual, and of maenadism in particular, affords women of premarital age a space where they can exert agency and power. Ritual, allowing the collective performance of virginity, delivers a potent statement for its relevance for the community, even in a nonpublic, state-sanctioned setting.

This examination of women-only rituals in foundation narratives[34] establishes that women's collective performance of their religious roles occupies a prominent place in the intensive process or self-fashioning that occurs during the Augustan and Flavian eras. In Propertius and Ovid, women-only rituals are connected with the values of inclusivity and flexibility. For both poets, the brawny masculinity of Hercules serves as a useful foil: his violent insistence on the exclusion of women from civic religion contrasts with the feminine deities of Bona Dea and Mater Matuta, who emerge as championing the welfare of all Romans. Propertius and Ovid thus make a compelling case that women's contributions to the religious life of the Roman state are positive, beneficial, and important for its continuing prosperity. This representation of women's rituals diverges from other ambiguous or outright negative depictions of female religious activity, especially in the context of maenadism, such as the women that participate in the Bacchic mysteries in Livy, the Ciconian women in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or the Lemnian women in Valerius and Statius. Furthermore, our examination of young women's choral ritual performances in Statius' *Achilleid* exposes the performative nature of gender, affirms the role ritual plays therein, and shows that in Roman thought, the categories of ritual, gender, and even poetic genre are fluid and malleable. In all three texts under examination, we witness a complex portrait of female religious identity, encompassing a broad spectrum of concerns, from politics to gender to poetics. Women-only rituals thus emerge as fully vested in the dynamics of ideological formation in Augustan and Flavian Rome.

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Epilogue

Tacita's Rites and the Story of Lara in Ovid's *Fasti* 2

The Roman goddess Muta or Tacita is the recipient of an odd rite in Ovid's *Fasti* 2.571–82.[1] A garrulous old woman (*anus*, 571), accompanied by young—probably unmarried—women (*puellis,* 572), places incense in a hole at a doorway, binds charmed threads around a lead object, perhaps a tablet, and utters mumblings with beans in her mouth. In a fire she roasts a fish, covered in pitch, pierced with a needle and sewn up, all the while pouring wine on it. She and her young female companions proceed to drink the rest of the wine, the old woman helping herself to the largest portion and getting quite drunk (*ebriaque*, 582). At the end of the rite, she cries, "we have bound hostile tongues and unfriendly mouths" (*hostiles linguas inimicaque uinximus ora*, 581). This ceremony resembles magical ritual, possibly because of the chthonic character of the deity, as she is celebrated right after the Feralia, where people give offerings to the dead. It is also concerned with silencing enemies: the binding rite evokes the *defixiones*, or binding spells, commonly described in magical narratives (Robinson 2011: 357–60).

Ovid proceeds to give a mythological *aition* for the rite (2.583–616). It turns out that Muta was a Naiad named Lara or Lala, Juturna's talkative sister and object of Jupiter's lust. Lara betrays to Juno her husband's affection for her sister; Jupiter punishes her by cutting her tongue and instructs Mercury to accompany her to the land of the dead. As he executes his task, Mercury rapes Lara, who gives birth to twins, the Lares, guardians of Roman homes and the city.

This strange and haunting story of silencing, mutilation, rape, death, and commemoration aptly encapsulates the persistent intersection of ritual, female agency, and power in Roman literature examined in this book. Ritual as both a category describing an array of practices and a method of cultural interpretation includes misrecognition, appropriation, and cultural transformation, and these processes are often reflected and enacted in literary

representations of rituals. Within this framework, religious activities performed by or related to women in Roman literature express a host of attitudes vis-à-vis various vehicles of power. Women's stances in these texts range from openly resisting or negotiating to affirming normative views and practices surrounding familial, social, religious, and political institutions, hierarchies, and protocols. Using Tacita/Lara's story as my starting point, I would like to draw some larger conclusions regarding the main themes, concepts, and arguments emerging from my discussion in the preceding pages.

Women's rituals are directly linked to issues of power, and state power in particular. As mother of the Lares, whose cult Augustus restored, Lara and the rituals honoring her are directly connected to the *princeps* and his program of religious and moral reform. Jupiter's role in the episode as the source of all authority further enhances the story's political message. Moreover, Tacita's incorporation into the Roman religious calendar commemorates both her act of resistance and its subsequent punishment, thus affirming the *princeps*' hegemonic power. Tacita's rite neatly fits in with the other instances of rituals performed by women that directly address questions surrounding power—whether simply gendered as male or explicitly linked to the state—and establishes the importance of women's religious activity in civic life and ideology. The episode offers a view of power that may be subject to interpretation, but the connection between women's rituals, state religion, and political authority is unmistakable.

Like most women performing their religious duties, the old woman who performs Tacita's rites in the *Fasti* lays claim to agency and empowerment. As the chief executor of the rite, she acts as a head priestess. Notably, she retains the power not only to speak (*nec tamen ipsa tacet*, 572) but also to silence others (581). Her agency is enabled by her role as priestess, a role embedded within her social and religious network. Although women were normally denied the right to drink wine in ancient Rome, the old woman and her young companions have access to it because of their religious identities and proceed to consume it, going against prescribed norms. Without seeking to overthrow the status quo, the women act both within the bonds imposed on them by the religious order and in a way that transgresses normative behaviors and social expectations.

As a space allowing the expression of female agency, ritual also permits the expression of counternarratives that the dominant ideology usually seeks to eliminate, control, or suppress. While ritual often affirms the status quo

by sanctioning misrecognition of authority, it may also enact processes of ideological negotiation. Though celebrating the mother of the Lares, Lara's story contains elements of resistance to authority. She openly defies Jupiter's instructions when she warns her sister (*effuge . . . ripas*, 604) and betrays Jupiter's desire for Juturna to Juno. Ironically, her priestess, in retaining the power to speak and to silence others, appears more akin to Jupiter than to the deity she apparently represents. Lara's resistance is reflected in the ritual itself. Although in every detail it resembles a *defixio*, a magic rite normally condemned by official religion, it is nevertheless celebrated in the manner of other state-sanctioned rites by occupying a place in the Roman calendar. While the episode appears to flaunt the state's ability to control this disturbing rite, it also embraces elements highlighting female resistance to and renegotiation of male authority.

Commensurate with the issue of female noncompliance with authority is the danger presented by women's collective action. As we have seen, Lara directly opposes Jupiter's will by acting in accordance with the gendered bonds of sisterhood. Similarly, the old woman who performs Tacita's rites uses her bondedness with other women within the context of religious life to defy moral tenets—and even legal statutes—regarding drinking. The narrative's humorous touches—for example, the use of the stereotype of the old woman who likes wine a little too much—only partially succeeds in deflecting the potentially dangerous character of the *anus* and her ritual.

Analogous patterns abound in other texts as well, as time and again Bacchic rites compromise masculine integrity and identity. For example, Bacchants such as Duronia, Procne, or the Lemnian women threaten male children, the patrilineal continuation of the household. The menace presented by Bacchic rites is also often associated with the threat inherent in female lamentation, which, in emphasizing loss and grief, has the potential to incite further violence rather than providing an outlet for community building through the act of commemoration.

Yet authors often portray women's collective action in the context of ritual as positive and beneficial for the community. Lara's story can serve as a case in point, since she emerges as the champion of marriage in her attempt to thwart Jupiter's amorous pursuits. She mobilizes other women against the god by advising her sister Juturna to flee his advances and by telling Juno of her husband's philandering. Even though Jupiter is closely linked to Augustus and the Roman state, it is Lara who protects the sanctity of marriage, the hallmark of the *princeps'* program of moral reform.

In other instances, authors present women's religious performances as correcting male transgressions (especially in the context of war, as in the case of the women in Statius' *Thebaid* 12) or championing the cause of justice (Philomela and Procne). Occasionally, though not frequently, women are rewarded for their piety (Telethusa). Female deities propose a foundational model for Rome that prizes peace (Mater Matuta) and inclusivity (Bona Dea in Propertius), while mortal women serve as paragons of *pietas* (Hypsipyle) or castigate abusive power (Polyxena), even if their portraits are not devoid of ambiguity.

Like most of the stories surrounding women' ritual voices, Lara's story invites us to contemplate the relationship between power and poetry. As if the episode's preoccupation with speaking and voice needed further elaboration, Ovid drives the point home by providing an alternative version of Lara's name, Lala (2.509–601) and pointing to its connection to the Greek verb λαλέω, to speak. Simultaneously, Ovid mobilizes the intertextual context of Vergil's *Aeneid* (by introducing Lara as Juturna's sister) and his own *Metamorphoses* (the story replicates motifs and themes from the stories of Echo and Philomela).[2] We may disagree about the reasons driving this mobilization, yet the story connects female speech with the problems facing the poetic voice and its relationship to male authority, a connection that permeates most of the narratives of women's religious performances examined in this book.

The hybridity of Tacita's ceremony, at once magic rite and state-sanctioned ritual, reflects a flexibility also evident in the delineation of gender categories and roles. Just as Tacita's rites stretch expectations regarding rituals normally belonging to the official calendar, so Lara's actions defy women's normative attitudes as compliant and submissive to male authority. Even as society prescribes strict gender roles based on a rigid binary, my study shows that ancient authors treat them as more malleable and fluid, representing both women and men in a variety of settings that affirm, challenge, or transgress traditional models. What is more, poets frequently espouse feminine points of view that oppose mainstream ideological tenets. To be sure, Roman authors were not protofeminists; their reasons for engaging with gender in this way are both multifarious and contingent on their sociopolitical milieu. One may conclude, however, that they display an understanding of the complexities of gender that scholarship only recently has begun to appreciate. Tacita's rites and Lara's story intimate not only the significance of female religious experiences but also their close relationship with

the ideological processes affecting Roman culture in the first centuries BCE and CE.

This book, then, proposes an analysis that allows us to trace contested and contesting points of view surrounding gender, sexuality, family, and society. As a result, a fresh array of ideological propositions and a complex tableau of ever-evolving, competing, and diverging ideas emerge, hopefully providing a point of departure for further study of these fascinating texts.

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Introduction

1. Initially, myth-and-ritual theorists (James George Frazer, Jane Harrison, Bronislaw Malinowski, Mircea Eliade) examined ritual in an attempt to understand religion. Later, cultural anthropologists such as Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz, and Jonathan Z. Smith adopted a functionalist approach, focusing on ritual activity as a lens through which we can view society and culture. For a useful overview of theories of ritual, see Bell 1992: 19–54.

2. For an introduction to Greek and Roman sexuality, see Skinner 2014, esp. 1–28. On the Romans, see Walters 1997, Williams 2010. Richlin 1991 offers a thoughtful critique of the Foucauldian model.

3. See Giddens 1991: 1–9, 192–207. Giddens argues that in premodern societies, individuals were more powerless and restricted by rigid social systems, traditions, institutions, bonds of kinship, and so on.

Chapter 1 • The Roman Wedding

1. On the Roman wedding in general, see Hersch 2010: 236–61, Treggiari 1991: 161–70.

2. Treggiari 1991: 164; Hersch 2010: 119–22. The question of the relationship of the wedding ceremony and Roman religion is a vexed one. Religion, law, ritual, and custom are all inextricably linked. See further Hersch 2010: 10–14, Treggiari 1991: 165.

3. On the bride's attire, see Hersch 2010: 69–114, Treggiari 1991: 163.

4. This is analogous to the Greek custom of *anakalypteria*. Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 227–48 sees *anakalypteria* as a series of unveilings that begin with the public unveiling of the bride during the wedding ceremony and end with the sexual act.

5. Burkert 1983: 62. But see also Treggiari 1991: 161.

6. Treggiari 1991: 163 argues that it is an archaic element, since it was also the daily ceremonial garment of the wife of the priest of Jupiter.

7. During the Republic, the minimum age was twelve for the bride and fourteen for the groom (Hersch 2010: 20; Treggiari 1991: 39–43). Exceptions were occasionally made regarding close blood relationships. See Hersch 2010: 21.

8. Hersch 2010: 22.

9. Caldwell 2007: 220–223.

10. See Hersch 2010: 24–25. Treggiari (1991: 168) posits that this ritual may have taken place when the bride entered her husband's home.

11. See, for instance, Verg. *A*. 8.124–25, 160–65. In the context of marriage, see, e.g., Verg. *A*. 4.307, Ov. *Met*. 6.506–07.

12. Similarly, Hersch 2010: 199 argues that the role of *pronuba* is equally unclear and that scholars erroneously associate her role in the wedding ceremony with the joining of the couple's hands.

13. On Hymenaeus in Roman wedding and the difficulties surrounding the role of the god, see Hersch 2010: 236–59.

14. Dido in the *Aeneid* laments her abandonment by Aeneas in her bedroom. On elements of wedding ritual in the Dido episode, see Panoussi 2009: 45–56. In Greek tragedy, Jocasta and Phaedra, for instance, famously commit suicide in their wedding chambers (Soph. *OT* 1242–64; Eur. *Hipp*. 767–68). In Stat. *Theb*. 5.90–92, the Lemnian Polyxo abandons her *thalamus* in order to execute her plan for revenge against her husband (see chapter 12:161–62).

15. Contrast Hom. *Od*. 23.183–204, where Odysseus describes his and Penelope's marital bed and chamber in great detail. Deiphobus in Verg. *A*. 6.520–22 describes himself sleeping in his and Helen's bedroom, but in this case, his sleep symbolizes his inadequacy as a husband. On the marriage of Deiphobus and Helen in Verg. *A*., see Panoussi 2009: 140–44.

16. Zeitlin 1996 and Foley 2001 are essential reading for anyone interested the variety of ways in which this motif operates in Greek tragedy.

17. On the use of this motif in Verg. *A*., see Panoussi 2009: 20–25.

Chapter 2 • Sexuality and Ritual

1. On the debate about the bride's name, see Thomson 1997: 348; Ready 2004: 153 n.1.

2. On the relationship between ritual representation and actual practice, see also the discussion of the term "sense of ritual" or *habitus* in the introduction:5.

3. Some believe the poem to reflect Greek wedding customs (Tränkle 1981, Courtney 1985, Thomsen 1992), while others consider them Roman (Fraenkel 1955, Williams 1958).

4. See chapter 1 for a summary of Roman wedding ritual and the explanation of the ritual terms used here.

5. The word has often been taken to mean trembling with old age on the basis of its use later on in the poem: *tremulum mouens/cana tempus anilitas*, "white-haired old age shaking its trembling head," 154–55. But, given the context, it is more likely that it is used here to convey parental distress (see Thomson 1997: 353–54).

6. It should be noted here that Catullus attributes to the bride a gesture that was performed by the groom. See Fest. 55 Lindsay; Fedeli 1983: 50. The active participation of the girl in the sexual act is incongruent with other images of her as a passive recipient of the groom's advances and anticipates her eventual sexual awakening—which, however, will be reserved for her husband alone.

7. Stigers 1977: 87 on the image of the flower in Sappho and Catullus.

8. Catullus uses same image in an acerbic manipulation in 11.21–24 to refer to a reversal of roles, with Catullus as the flower and Lesbia as the plow. The same image

of defloration is further employed in Verg. *A*. 9.435–37 and 11.68–71 to cast the violent death of a young warrior (Euryalus and Pallas respectively) as defloration, building on concepts of virginity, marriage, sexuality, and homoeroticism. On this imagery, see also Fowler 1987: 185–98, Hardie 1994: 150, and Panoussi 2009: 30–31.

9. On the use of this adjective, see also Ready 2004: 156–57.

10. Fedeli 1983: 96–97 offers evidence that the theme of giving up illicit affairs was one of the standard themes of epithalamia.

11. On the debate about what the nuts may symbolize, see Fedeli 1983: 88–90 and Thomsen 1992: 48–49. Both argue that the nuts symbolize childhood.

12. Implications of violence are also inherent in this ritual act. The spear that has shed blood is also a symbol of the violence of the act of defloration, marked in humans by the shedding of blood. See Burkert 1983: 62.

13. On the groom as preferring homoeroticism to married life, see Thomsen 1992: 63–73. As a master, however, Manlius would have an active sexual role in his relationship with the young household slaves, and there is nothing in the text to suggest otherwise. See Butrica 2005: 224; Williams 2010: 318 n.97. On the role of the *glaber*, see Williams 2010: 78–79.

14. Fedeli 1983: 44.

15. See Thomson 1997: 363, Fedeli 1983: 145.

16. See below, n. 23.

17. Thomsen 1992: 174–93 offers support for the importance of Greek wedding ritual for an understanding of poem 62, yet he admits that the references to the *raptio* point to Roman ritual customs. He concludes (193) that the poem reflects mainly Greek customs but also contains Roman elements.

18. Thomson 1997: 367 notes that the lines refer to the ceremony of *sponsalia*, where the *sponsio*, the signing of the wedding contract between the bride's father and the fiancé, took place.

19. Thomsen 1992: 182 calls into question the scholarly consensus that the lacuna reproaches Hesperus as a thief. He rightly notes that after the previous stanza's references to Hesperus as a violent rapist, a description of him as a thief would be rather anticlimactic.

20. On the importance of this statement for the poem as a whole, see Thomsen 1992: 227–30.

21. On the debate on the provenance of the image, see Fraenkel 1955: 8, Courtney 1985: 87.

22. *Par* here also denotes an equal match with respect to social rank. See Quinn 1973: 281.

23. Most commentators (e.g., Fraenkel 1955: 6, Quinn 1973: 282) believe that the lines are spoken by the boys. Certainly the language the boys employ throughout the poem supports this argument. Others point out that the rules of the genre dictate that the contest concludes with the winner (see Thomsen 1992: 171). Verg. *Ecl.* 7, however, provides evidence that this is not always the case (see Edwards 1993: 44). Goud 1995: 31–32 suggests that it is the leader of the girls' chorus, acting as a *pronuba*, who urges the bride to yield. Thomsen 1992: 223–30 argues that this is the poet's voice: he has the last word in the other long poems, while it is not surprising that the male point of view prevails, since the poet is a man after all. Earlier (212–14) he adduces yet

another convincing argument for his case by drawing a parallel with Plautus' *Casina*: he interprets the passage as containing an exhortation to the bride to consummate the marriage, which in the play is uttered by the *pronuba* and in 61.204–05 by the poet.

24. On the pedigree of the division of identity into thirds, see Ellis 1889: 199 and Thomsen 1992: 217.

25. Thomsen 1992: 222 suggests that the use of these terms refers to marriage *in manu*.

26. Cic. *Fin*. 1.35. The speaker, a descendant of Torquatus, asserts that Manlius put his son to death for the sake of military discipline and the greater good. Livy's account (8.19) offers similar motives for Manlius' actions.

27. On the importance of Penelope at this juncture and its relationship to the poem's earlier reference to the myth of Paris, see Ready 2004: 155–56.

28. The fragility of marriage, and of the *domus* more generally, is a recurring theme in the Catullan corpus. Fidelity plays an important role therein as it relates to the portrayal of the relationship between Catullus and Lesbia as a failed marriage. In 68b.73–86, Laodamia is hailed as the model of female fidelity, yet her passion for her husband does not prevent the destruction of their *domus*. On the complex web of comparisons and contrasts between Laodamia, Lesbia, and Catullus himself, see deVilliers 2008 and Lyne 1998. Ritual plays a role in this passage as well, since the text attributes the tragic fate of their union to a failed sacrifice, the precise context of which is subject to debate: see Lyne 1998: 207 (who believes it is a neglected offering during the construction of their house), Thomas 1978 (who argues that it refers to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia), and Van Sickle 1980 (who rebuts Thomas' proposal). See also Thomson 1997: 482. Regardless of the solution to this problem, it is instructive to note that ritual, marriage, and erotic passion intersect in this instance also, confirming the importance of this nexus of associations for the Catullan oeuvre.

Chapter 3 • Isis at a Wedding

1. Nevertheless, there is plenty of evidence that Isis was worshipped by both men and women. See Swetnam-Burland 2015: 112–16.

2. See also Goff 2002.

3. Several studies have shed light on the episode: Lämmle 2005 usefully considers it in view of ancient medical theories; Boehringer 2007: 232–60 proposes that the text constructs love among women as an impossibility, while in a similar vein, Kamen 2012 suggests that the narrative conceptualizes non-penetrative sex as deeply unnatural. Most recently, Begum-Lees (forthcoming) argues that Iphis' eventual transformation is far more ambiguous than scholars allow.

4. On Isis at Pompeii, see, most recently, Swetnam-Burland 2015: 105–41. For a thorough overview of the current scholarship on Isis, see Swetnam-Burland 2015: 188n.13. Recent work on Isis and its relationship with the Greco-Roman world can be found in Bricault 2013, Bommas 2012, and Versluys 2010. For a review of documents on Isis' cult worship during the Hellenistic period, see Gasparro 2007. Other works of contemporary Roman literature where Isis figures prominently is Tib. 1.3 and 1.7; Prop. 2.33a; and Ov. *Am*. 2.13. On Isis in Tibullus, see Bowditch 2011; in Propertius, Miller 1981–82; in Ovid 2.13, McKeown 1998: 276–93, and Bricault 2013: 500–503.

5. In 58, 53, and 48 BCE. See Takács 1995: 56; Heyob 1975:18.

6. On Augustus, Cleopatra, and Isis, see also Takács 2011.

7. For a negative view on Isis' foreignness, see Verg. *A*. 8.696–700 and discussion in chapter 3:46; on Eastern effeminacy, *A*. 4.215–17.

8. Orlin 2002: 6: "Dio reports that on two separate occasions Augustus banned the worship of Egyptian deities inside the *pomerium*. . . . Augustus had built much of his political propaganda during the 30s around a polarity he created between Rome and Egypt, so he clearly had special reasons to apply a ban to Egyptian rites; there is no reason to assume such a ban was religious in nature or had any relation to other foreign traditions." See also Takács 1995: 79, where she mentions that Augustus' close friend Messalla included (presumably with the *princeps'* permission or tolerance) an Osiris idol, an Egyptian import, among his family's *penates* (Tib. 1.7).

9. Takács 1995: 78. The connection of that building with Augustus' wife is now in question. On Livia's villa, see Messineo 2001.

10. See Takács 1995: 29–30. Malaise 1972 offers a comprehensive study on the cults of Isis in Italy and how they spread. See also Malaise 1984: 1615–91.

11. On Isis as Artemis, see Witt 1977: 141–51 and Delia 1998: 545–48.

12. On the development of Isis as a lunar deity in Rome, as well as her multiple associations with Artemis and other deities, see Delia 1998.

13. Anderson 1972: 467. See also my discussion below (chapter 3:49).

14. On Plutarch's treatment of Isis' myth and cult, see Richter 2001.

15. See Anderson 1972: 465, Bömer 1977: 469, Graf 1988: 59–61, Ahl 1985: 149–50, Leitao 1995, Heslin 2005: 207–08 and 226–27 with a useful critique of Leitao 1995. Lämmle 2005: 194–97 offers an extensive discussion of the extant Greek versions of this story.

16. Modern scholarship has debunked the older belief among scholars that Isis was primarily a goddess of the lower classes. Swetnam-Burland 2015: 112–16 presents in detail evidence from inscriptions that wealthy freeborn Romans made dedications to Isis. See also a discussion on elite Romans who minted coins with Isiac themes in the years of the late Republic in Takács 1995: 42–51.

17. Scholars have commented that Crete is a place associated with sexual deviance. See Armstrong 2006, especially 12–15 and 19–20 for an articulation of the issue. See also 111–14, where she discusses Ovid's portrait of Pasiphae in *Ars Amatoria* 1. Pintabone (2002: 277) has argued that the substitution of Leto with Isis points to Egypt as a place where Iphis' and Ianthe's union can be realized without a sex change, since there is evidence of female same-sex marriage in Egypt (see Brooten 1996: 332–36, although the evidence cited is from the second century CE). In a similar vein, Boehringer 2007: 232–60 discusses Isis' association with the moon as permitting homoeroticism between women. Her claims, however, are not supported by the evidence.

18. See Wheeler 1997: 194–96 on Iphis' name as etymologically linked with the male. Ormand 2009: 218 argues that Ovid uses the myth of Osiris to indicate the importance of social gender.

19. Telethusa's agency has also been observed by Lämmle 2005: 201–2, who suggests that she takes on some of the attributes of the goddess.

20. Anderson 1972: 467, Ahl 1985: 149–50. Wheeler 1997: 194 adds: "If Telethusa's name is indicative of her role as a worshipper of Isis, one may also compare the name

of Ianthe's father, Telestes, which means 'initiate' or 'initiator' and likewise contributes to the air of mystery religion that surrounds the tale."

21. See Anderson 1972: 472.

22. See Verg. *A*. 8.696–98, *regina in mediis patrio uocat agmina sistro,/ necdum etiam geminos a tergo respicit anguis./ omnigenumque deum monstra et latrator Anubis* ("In the middle, the queen summons the army with her fatherland's rattle and she does not yet see the twin snakes behind her back; all kinds of monstrous gods and barking Anubis").

23. See also Richlin 1993: 536 on *puer* as denoting the sexually submissive status of slaves.

24. Begum-Lees (forthcoming) goes even further, arguing that Iphis' transformation into a male remains inconclusive, pointing to ambiguities in the description of the transformation and particularly to Iphis' lack of facial hair.

25. On the concept of bondedness and its importance, see my discussion in the introduction:8–9.

26. Swetnam-Burland 2015: 125 posits that the identification may stem from similarities in iconography. This identification is probably already at work in Callimachus' lost *The Coming of Io* (http://stoa.org/sol-entries/kappa/227 =Adler 227) and and Lycophron's *Alexandra* 1291–95.

27. Swetnam-Burland 2015: 135.

28. Alternative modes of communication are often used by women: Philomela and Arachne use weaving, Io uses writing. On Philomela, see Richlin 1992: 162–65.

29. On Ovid's *Am*. 2.13, see McKeown 1998: 276–93, Due 1980, Gamel 1989, James 2003: 173–76.

30. See also Ramsby 2007: 134–39. Poetry's important role in commemoration is also at play in Ovid's narrative of Io in *Met*. 1.720–21, where the dead Argus is addressed with a distich evoking the genre of the funerary epigram. See Swetnam-Burland 2015: 133.

31. See, for example, Severy 2003, esp. 213–51 and Milnor 2006, esp. 48–93.

32. See Ramsby 2007: 138: "Ovid points us to the optimistic possibility that what has been lost [i.e. male empowerment] may once again be found. The aristocratic, male elite may have lost its inherent right to self-determination, but just as nature abhors a vacuum—the power vacuum will be short-lived. . . . That an Egyptian goddess bestows upon Iphis this newfound potency suggests that the new elite of society may well be from foreign lands, or from layers of society that appear currently incapable of power. . . . The idea of women acquiring power . . . may have catalysed many who read this story to consider the fluidity of power structures in the new Imperial age, and the forces that would establish the new hierarchy."

Chapter 4 • Wartime Weddings

1. On the dating of Seneca's tragedies, see Fitch 1981, Fantham 1982: 9–14, Nisbet 1990, Braund 2015: 27. On the dating of Lucan's *BC*, see Fantham 1992a: 1–3, 2011: 12–17.

2. The women of Lucan's *BC* have been getting more attention in recent years. See Keith 2000; Augoustakis 2010; Sannicandro 2010; Finiello 2005 on Erichtho; Chiu 2005 on Julia; Caston 2011 on Marcia and Cornelia. On Marcia as a Stoic figure, see Harich 1990.

3. See Panoussi 2009: 115–73.

4. On the motif and its various functions in Greek tragedy, see Rehm 1994. Seaford 1987 provides a very useful typology of the tragic wedding.

5. Wilson 1983: 39–40, Boyle 1994: 21–26, and *passim*.

6. For a full account of the historical details surrounding this story, see Fantham 1992a: 139–40.

7. Dinter 2012: 83 comments on these words as evoking a tombstone inscription, which serves as means of lasting commemoration of Marcia herself. Dinter's interpretation of Marcia's words as a funerary inscription confirm yet again that wedding and burial are treated as interchangeable in this episode.

8. Caston 2011: 138–39 argues that Marcia is preoccupied with her reputation.

9. See Coffee 2009: 175–81 on reciprocity and exchange in this episode. In this aspect, too, there is distortion. Coffee observes (177) that Marcia is a gift that is returned, unlike normal practice, whereby Romans only returned a gift if they were rejecting it. Coffee also explains that Marcia is not a loan either, because the benefit of the loan accrues only to the receiver. Coffee goes on to argue that the exchange conforms with the Roman ideal of *utilitas*, securing a bond between Cato and Hortensius (178). Yet I would argue that Lucan has to distort both the facts and the rules of reciprocity to make this point, since in reality Marcia never had children with Hortensius.

10. On the dangers of female lamentation and grief, see, for instance, Loraux 1998, Foley 2001: 21–55, and part 2:85–113.

11. Augoustakis 2010: 170 compares Marcia's words to Erichtho's ritual incantation: *da nomina rebus,/ da loca; da uocem qua mecum fata loquantur*, in *BC* 6.773–74.

12. See also Keith 2000: 88. Marcia's request is highly unusual. In the Republic, women did not accompany their husbands in their military or administrative posts abroad, as they did in the Empire; see Fantham 1992a: 144.

13. See Fantham 1992a: 144; Ahl 1976: 247–49; Johnson 1987: 43–44.

14. Fantham 1992a: 146–47 has an excellent discussion on the problems in this passage, namely the uncertainty as to who is wearing the headdress (probably the *pronuba*, not the bride) and who steps over the threshold (probably the bride).

15. See her previous description in 2.340. For a reading of Marcia as an allegory of the republic, see Ahl 1976: 249–50.

16. Cato's role here is usually read as that of a responsible *paterfamilias* (Fantham 1992a: 139) or as a portrait that completes his image as *pater patriae* (Ahl 1976: 247–52).

17. On the "marriage to death" motif, see chapter 1:20. On the motif of perverted sacrifice, see, e.g., Seneca's *Thyestes* 690–721, *Oedipus* 321–30. Schiesaro 2003: 91–94 offers an illuminating discussion on this motif in *Thyestes* and other Senecan tragedies and its relationship with earlier Roman works, especially Vergil's *Aeneid*.

18. Schiesaro 2003: 91–94. On allusion in Seneca's *Troades*, see Trinacty 2014: 41–45 (Vergil) and 167–74 (Catullus and Ovid).

19. Recent years have seen a number of studies on Senecan tragedy: Erasmo 2004: 122–39, Staley 2010, Trinacty 2014. See also Trinacty 2015.

20. Fabre-Serris 2015 argues that in this tragedy, Seneca expresses his views on the Stoic concept of the control of emotions, which he also expounds in his philosophical works.

21. Also noted by Fantham 1982: 342.

22. Fabre-Serris 2015: 108–12 analyzes the figure of Andromache in the play and argues that she is an example of Seneca's views on women's inability to control their emotions. Even as she commands her words, she cannot command her body, as is seen in her exchange with Ulysses (691–704).

23. On the problems surrounding this genealogy, see also Fantham 1982: 341.

24. Wilson 1983: 48. On Hecuba's role in the play as a captive woman participating in a triumph-like spectacle, see Fabre-Serris 2015: 104–8.

25. On repetition throughout the play, see Boyle 1994: 147–48.

26. Calchas further distorts customs by using the verb *tradere* to describe the offering of Polyxena to Achilles, a verb normally used when a father hands over his daughter as wife. Notice the placement of the word order, with *parenti . . . suo* enclosing *coniugem tradat*, just as Polyxena will permanently belong to Achilles at the end of this perverted ceremony.

27. Wilson 1983: 54–55. Erasmo 2004:126–27 notes that the passage invites the audience to contemplate Polyxena's reaction to her own death. On the audience's reaction see also Staley 2010: 63, where he observes that the internal audience (both Greeks and Trojans) feels wonder, terror, and pity, not a desire for further cruelty.

28. Sen. *Tro.* 1154, Pyrrhus' hesitation before he goes on to kill Polyxena looks back to Euripides' *Hec.* 566. But Euripides describes Polyxena facing her death in erotic terms from the perspective of the male gaze: see Segal 1990: 111–13. For a summary of the various readings of the passage, see Gregory 1999: 112–13. See also Fantham 1982: 381–82.

29. One may point out that the episode's intertextual contact with Euripides' *Hecuba* also suggests the possibility (or likelihood) of revenge, which, however, will perpetuate the cycle of violence.

Chapter 5 • Quartilla's Priapic Weddings in Petronius' Satyrica

1. To be sure, other female characters, such as Tryphaena, Circe, and Oenothea, display similar characteristics of power and humiliate Encolpius in similar ways. My focus here is on women's actions within a ritual framework.

2. See, for instance, Weinreich 1929, 1968; Schmeling 1971; Burkert 1987; Cosci 1980.

3. Similar issues occur in the episode of Circe and Oenothea but, as it deals with magic, it falls beyond the scope of the present study.

4. To be sure, the fragmentary nature of the novel casts some uncertainty on the precise placement of the Quartilla episode within it. See Schmeling 2011: xxv. From what we know of mystery/initiation rites such as those parodied here, a *hieros gamos* between the initiand and the deity concluded the ritual (Burkert 1985: 108). As a result, we can posit with confidence that the episode would end soon after the scene of the wedding of Giton and Pannychis. See also Schmeling 1971: 351.

5. On Priapus, see Herter 1932 and his article on *RE*. Two editions of the *Priapea* with text and commentary appeared recently: Callebat 2012, and Codoñer and González Iglesias 2014. See also Parker 1988, Richlin 1992: 116–43.

6. See Schmeling 2011: 27.

7. The thieves' interruption of the banquet is a joking dig at Priapus' role as protector from theft in Roman households. The fact that the thieves get away with this

break-in openly mocks the deity's powers and confirm Quartilla's dominance. On the theatrical elements of the scene, see Panayotakis 1995: 46–47.

8. On "the wrath of Priapus" and the *Satyrica* as a parody of Homer's *Odyssey*, see, for instance, Rankin 1971: 52–58, Courtney 2001: 152–57.

9. Encolpius and Giton are clearly on the low end of the power spectrum, as they find themselves on the less advantageous side of the door, as Schmeling 2011: 46 observes. The servant makes an entrance with her head covered (*operto capite*), which may denote that a deity's representative is nearby. See Schmeling 2011: 46. Corbeill 2004: 26 interprets this gesture as avoiding meeting signs of ill omen.

10. In many cases, the word *ecce* is used to denote something strange or unexpected (OLD s.v. 4 and L&S s.v. IIc), often in connection with divine or other supernatural epiphany. Within the context of divine epiphany in Verg. *A*. 6.45–55, Norden 1926: 136–37 argues that the repetition of *deus* in *A*. 6.46 is an element from ritual and offers many examples in other texts. Compare also the use of *ecce* in *A*. 2.270, where Aeneas sees Hector's ghost in his sleep and V. Fl. 4.392, with Tisiphone's appearance.

11. See Courtney 2001: 65 n.19, Schmeling 2011: 48.

12. Ritual elements are arguably behind the use of *admittere* (16.2; 19.2). Quartilla is cast in the role of the Sibyl in Vergil (*A*. 6.258), admitting only the initiands and warning the profane to stay away from the sacred proceedings. Within this intertextual framework, Quartilla's words assume the authority of the Sibyl's prophecy. Both episodes end with a wedding: the Sibyl prophesies a bloody marriage between Aeneas and Lavinia, while Quartilla officiates a perverted wedding ceremony between Giton and Pannychis. On the Sibyl and the wedding motif, see Panoussi 2009: 138–41.

13. On the tragic motifs at work here, see Conte 1996: 111–12. Conte also argues that the carnivalesque "world turned upside down" theme in the *Satyrica* goes hand in hand with a reversal of literary canons and hierarchies (116).

14. Quartilla warns: *quod in sacello Priapi uidistis uulgetis deorumque consilia proferatis in populum*, 17.8 (that you may not divulge what you saw in Priapus' shrine and reveal the secrets of the gods to the common people).

15. Vergil's Dido is another intertext here. Quartilla's tears on the bed cannot fail to evoke Dido famously weeping on her bed before she commits suicide (*A*. 4.650–62). This intertext adds an erotic layer to the relationship between the priestess and the men. See Schmeling 2011: 54 for further examples from Ovid.

16. Compare Ov. *Tr.* 2.104–05 and see Walsh 1970: 90.

17. On similarities to Callimachus' *Hymn to Athena*, see Aragosti et al. 1988: 54–55.

18. Hofmann 1978 makes mention of Quartilla's use of the word *mediusfidius* as a sign of emancipation (38: "*mediusfidius* . . . wird hauptsächlich von Männern gebraucht, . . . bei Petron . . . auch von emanzipierten Frauenspersonen").

19. See Cosci 1980 on this initiation as enacting the death of the initiand. In addition, the threat is made three times, a number significant in both ritual and narrative, once from the mouth of the *ancilla* and twice from Quartilla herself.

20. On women as sex-crazed in Roman literature, see Richlin 1992: 173–77, 202–07, 215–19, and Richlin 2009: 89. On sexual roles in Petronius within the context of the ancient novel, see Konstan 1994: 113–25.

21. On Priapic punishments, male passivity, and humiliation, see Slater 1990: 41–42 and Habash 2007: 219.

22. Schmeling 2011: 61.

23. The point can be pressed still further, since slaves were called *pueri* all their lives. As Richlin 1993: 536 notes, the term likely refers to their sexual use along with the fact that they were ascribed the age status of a real *puer*. On Giton as *puer*, see Richlin 2009: 86–87. On Giton's social status, see also Vannini 2010: 182–83, who classifies Giton as *ingenuus*, freeborn but not of freeborn parents, though he recognizes that he is often employed as *puer*.

24. See also OLD s.v. 5, 6, and 7.

25. *Sopitionibus* is printed by both Müller 2003 and Giardina & Cuccioli Melloni 1995. See also Schmeling 2011: 65. Whichever reading one chooses, the meaning does not change. See OLD s.v. *sopio* and s.v. *sopitio,* and Catullus 37.10.

26. Even if we concede that she acts as a representative of Priapus, her dominance is emphasized in this instance more than her connection to the deity.

27. On the *cinaedus* in Rome, see Richlin 1993, especially 530–40, where she focuses on their identification with passivity and femininity. At various points in the episode *cinaedi* are ridiculed for their use of makeup and other feminine accoutrements (23.5).

28. Adams 1982: 145–46 notes the "incorrect" use of *caedo* (*cecidit* 21.2). The word normally applies to the action of the penetrator with an undertone of punishment but here it refers to the penetrated. Courtney 2001: 68 states that this reversal is frequent in sexual situations in Petronius.

29. E.g. Mart. 3.81. See also Richlin 1993: 549.

30. Aragosti et al. 1988: 85 posit that it is similar to the staff of the *lanista* in a gladiatorial context.

31. Habash 2007: 219.

32. Compare Ov. *F.* 4.243 and see Schmeling 2011: 69. The same connection among eunuchs, passive homosexuality, and femininity is also found in Juvenal 2.110–16, where the narrator mentions Cybele's feminized priests right before he goes on to castigate the occurrence of weddings between men in Rome (Juv. 2. 117–42). See also Richlin 1993: 552–53.

33. There are several similarities between Juvenal's description of *cinaedi* in *Satire* 2 and this passage. Compare *clunem agitant* (Juv. 2.21) and *molles* (Juv. 2.47) with *clune agili*; *molles* (Petr. 23.3). On Cybele's eunuchs, see Butler 1998: 243–47.

34. Slater 1990: 46: "The meaning of the word controls behavior, and Quartilla controls the frame of meaning."

35. See contra Habash 2007: 222, who argues that Giton stands for Priapus at the wedding.

36. Schmeling 1971: 347 mentions that in this ritual, the god takes the place of the husband and performs his marital duties, while the husband, just like an elegiac *exclusus amator*, stands at the door of the wedding chamber. But if we accept that Encolpius' object of affection is Giton, then in this schema too the gender roles are reversed, with Giton assuming the role of the virgin bride and Pannychis standing for Priapus.

37. Suet. *Nero* 28 talks about Nero's wedding to Sporus, but the castrated Sporus played the role of the bride while Nero was the bridegroom. Williams 2010: 251–52

argues that accounts of this wedding are preoccupied with Sporus' feminization by Nero. The young man was castrated, forced to appear in public as a woman, given a woman's name, etc. For Williams, the sources convey disapproval of Nero's "public flaunting of Sporus' demasculinization," which indicated a greater threat to masculine privilege. On another note, there is a deep disconnect between Sporus' name, which means "seed" in Greek, a word denoting masculine potency, and his new feminine identity. Nero's efforts to give him new feminine names are duly noted by our sources (Williams 2010: 251). As in the *Satyrica*, language is manipulated to correspond to a new perverted reality.

38. There were seven grades of initiates in Mithraic mysteries (Burkert 1987: 98–99). Allen further speculates that this wedding may have been a part of Nero's initiation into one of these grades (that of *Nymphus*) and that with his later wedding to Sporus, Nero initiated the eunuch into that grade.

39. A wedding between men is also described in scathing terms by Juv. *Sat*. 2.117–42, on which see Richlin 1993: 545. On marriage between males in Roman sources, see also Williams 2010: 245–52. Caldwell 2007: 221–22 discusses such weddings in Martial and Juvenal, arguing that these are "an extreme example of the detachment of wedding ceremony and law."

40. On gender, psychoanalysis, and the gaze, see Irigaray 1997, whose observations on the gaze are shared by feminist film critics such as Kaplan. See also Greene 1998: 73–74 and Fredrick 2012.

41. See Janan 2012 for an overview of Lacanian theory as applied to the study of Roman elegy. On the theory of the gaze in Roman elegy, see Fredrick 2012.

42. On the role of the door and the function of voyeurism within the elegiac context of the *exclusus amator* in this episode, see Schmeling 1971: 337–40. On voyeurism in the *Satyrica*, see Sullivan's classic monograph (1968: 238–53) and Gill's 1973 rebuttal.

43. Mulvey 1975: 13–14. Mulvey also explores the links between voyeurism and castration anxiety. The connection between the two is obvious in Petronius' text, since Quartilla's dominance is related to Encolpius' sexual impotence.

44. See Schmeling 2011: 79, who cites all relevant evidence.

45. See as early as Alcman's *Partheneion* (PMGF 1), where the chorus leaders Agido and Hagesichora occupy a prominent position and are especially admired. On female choruses in Greece and the *choregos* in particular, see Calame 2001: 43–73. On female choral performance, see Stehle 1997: 71–118; esp. 74–88. Compare descriptions of Bacchic rituals, such as in Verg. *A*. 7.397.

46. Encolpius' subsequent attempts to cure his impotence (for instance in his encounters with Circe, Proselenus, and Oenothea, *Sat*. 130–38) affirm the failure of the Priapic rites. Based on the larger gender dynamics as articulated through the ritual context, this failure is not surprising, even as the conclusion of the episode is missing. Encolpius is successful in becoming "whole" again, as his words in 140.12–13 are usually interpreted. Unfortunately, the narrative breaks off soon after, so we have no sense of what follows, though Schmeling 2011: 549 suggests that other adventures probably follow.

Chapter 6 • Roman Burial Rites

1. Toynbee 1971 is the only such study but focuses on canonical authors and monumental architecture. See Rife 1997 on the virtues and limitations of her approach and on the status of scholarship since then.

2. See, e.g., Hopkins 1983 for a historical approach using demographic data, Scheid 1984, and Maurin 1984, using cultural anthropology. See also Corbeill 2004: 67–106, using insights from anthropology and sociology.

3. See, for example, Cic. *Ver.* 2.5.118; Sen. *Dial.* 6.3.2. See also Treggiari 1991: 484.

4. See Scheid 1984: 121 for further information on Roman funerary monuments. The image of a woman with her hair loosened and beating her breasts is very common in literature, and we will encounter it many times in our analysis in the following chapters. On unbound hair and women as spectacle, see Richlin 2001: 237–38.

5. The Twelve Tables forbade Roman women to scratch their cheeks during lamentation, but the practice is a staple of funerary descriptions (Treggiari 1991: 490). Although it is hard to separate literary convention from real practice, we can assume that the gesture was not wholly foreign to a Roman audience.

6. On the *praefica* in particular, see Richlin 2001: 243–45, who identifies her as the opposite of the *pronuba*, and Dutsch 2008: 259–64. See Dutsch 2008 on the role of *neniae* in Roman funerary practices. On women's lamentation in Roman culture and literature more generally, see also Richlin 2001, Corbeill 2004: 67–106, Keith 2008, Panoussi 2009: 145–73, Sharrock 2011.

7. See Polybius 6.53.1 and Dutsch 2008: 265. Dutsch 2008: 269–70 offers a reconstruction of the constitutive elements of the *neniae*.

8. Compare, for example, Andromache's portrait in Verg. *A*. 3.303–05 and the women's behavior in *A*. 5.613–17; 659–63. See Panoussi 2009: 146–54; 166–73. Sharrock 2011 offers a reading of female mourning in the *Aeneid* and argues that the women's intervention affects the men's emotional state but has no effect on policy.

9. Philosophers praise women who show control (cf. Sen. *Dial.* 12.16.2), the assumption being that they have done something unusual. On Rutulia losing her son, see Cic. *Att*. 12.22.2, Sen. *Dial.* 12.16.7. On a contrast between Livia and Octavia, see Sen. *Dial.* 6.2.3–3.2. See also Treggiari 1991: 495 and Fabre-Serris 2015: 101–03.

10. See Panoussi 2009: 159–66 on the use of burial rites as reconciliation, unity, and identity building in Vergil's *Aeneid*.

11. Seremetakis engages particularly with Alexiou (2002), whose pioneering work on ancient Greek lament has been very influential.

12. For a similar analysis regarding Homer's *Iliad*, see also Karanika 2014: 78–84.

Chapter 7 • Mourning Orpheus

1. The reversal of wedding and funerary motifs is discussed in chapters 1:20 and 4:53–65. As stated earlier, by Ovid's time the motif has almost become a *topos* to describe unhappy unions. Compare the case of Dido, Amata, and Helen in Vergil's *Aeneid*, on which see Panoussi 2009: 123–44. Ovid uses the same device in *Met*. 6.428–38, the wedding of Procne and Tereus, discussed in chapter 8:141–42. On Orpheus' wedding and its relationship with his song to the underworld, see also Primmer 1979: 125–26.

2. On Hymenaeus and wedding ritual, see chapter 1:19–20. Compare, for instance, the invocation of Hymenaeus in Catullus 61.4–5 and 62.4–5, and of course throughout both poems, on which see chapter 2. In the Ovidian passage, note also that the word *Hymenaeus* is enclosed within the phrase *Ciconumque . . . ad oras*, thus visually prefiguring the eventual capture of Orpheus by the Ciconian women.

3. On the role of wedding ritual in the episode, see my discussion in chapter 3:47–49. On the parallels between the Iphis story and that of Orpheus, see Galinsky 1975: 86; Makowski 1996: 31–33.

4. Also noted by Anderson 1972: 482. See Cat. 62.42: *multi illum pueri, multae optauere puellae* (many boys, many girls desired him).

5. On Orpheus' sexual identity and its relationship with desire, authority, and language, see Janan 1998b.

6. Lamentation is also cast as a "heroic" feat, a new mission for the poet/hero as indicated by *est ausus*, thus implying a tension between the poetic genres of elegy and epic. See below, n.19.

7. Early sources do not specify the name of the daughter. Later sources (Soph. *Tereus*, fr. 585 TrGF) identify Procne as the mother and Philomela as her sister. See Gantz 1993: 239–41. Vergil here uses *philomela* for the nightingale instead of the usual Latin word *luscinia*, thus also alluding to that myth. See also Farrell 1991: 323.

8. Note that *integrat* is emphasized by enjambment and a pause. The same context is to be found in women's laments in Verg. *A*. 9.480, *caelum dehinc questibus implet*, in the lament of Euryalus' mother, which resembles closely *Geo*. 4.515, and in Ariadne's lament in Catullus 64.130, *haec extremis maestam dixisse querellis*, although the textual echoes are less stark. See Thomas 1988: 234.

9. Farrell 1991: 324 observes that Penelope's reunion with Odysseus is imminent, since she is speaking with him at this moment, though without knowing it, and forms a contrast to the story of Orpheus, who remains permanently separated from his wife and a "victim of arbitrary forces beyond his ken." There is a stark difference between Penelope and the daughter of Pandion, however, because Penelope bears no responsibility for her situation, unlike the heroine in the simile, who is said to have accidentally (δι' ἀφραδίας, *Od*. 19.523) killed her own son. Farrell 1991: 323 correctly notes that the situation Penelope describes applies to Orpheus' situation better than to her own.

10. Stanford 1958: 271 points out that their tears are of relief and joy, and therefore deems the ensuing simile not quite appropriate. See also Heubeck and Hoekstra 1988: 275: "These lines have been regarded by analytic critics as an indication that the recognition of Odysseus as we have it is the work of a *Bearbeiter*. . . . The emphasis on the noise made by weeping men and the simile of the bereaved birds would rather suit a dirge." This is precisely the point of the simile, however. The male heroes can mourn their loss but are not susceptible to the dangers of lamentation.

11. *Od*. 16.220, καὶ νύ κ' ὀδυρομένοισιν ἔδυ φάος ἠελίοιο (and now the light of the sun would have gone down upon their weeping).

12. Note that Vergil's expression is different from the Homeric phrase "loud-sounding voice" (πολυηχέα φωνήν, *Od*. 19.521).

13. Thomas 1988: 234. This is relevant to Vergil's poetic program, as the vignette on Orpheus and Eurydice is a contemplation of the power and limitations of poetry

and contains experimentation with the genres of epyllion (miniepic) and elegy, on which see Thomas 1988: 225–26.

14. See also the introduction to this section. By contrast, in Vergil's *Georgics* (4.471–84) the focus is on the effect of Orpheus' song on to the shades of the underworld, not the song itself, which is only reported indirectly.

15. On the meaning of *usus* here, see Bömer 1980: 25.

16. See Hardie 2002: 65, where he discusses the themes of love and loss in Orpheus' song in book 10 of the *Met*. and argues that it returns "obsessively to the themes of love, loss, forbidden desire, and the commemoration of loss. . . . Ovid's Orpheus sings both of attempts to perpetuate the presence of the dead through various kinds of memorialization (Apollo and Hyacinthus, Venus and Adonis), and of the magical creation of living presence in lifeless matter (Pygmalion). Each of these stories in its own way refigures Orpheus' forbidden desire, and thus allusively re-presents Eurydice both for Orpheus and for the reader."

17. On the connections between elegy and lament, see also Hardie 2002: 63: "The connection between erotic desire and lament is built into Latin love elegy through the etymological derivations that make elegy a poetry of lament."

18. As mentioned in *Met*. 7.410–15 and 9.185.

19. Orpheus here articulates a tension between poetry and heroism which is pervasive throughout book 10. See Knox 1986: 50–51, who offers an analysis of Ovid's Callimachean reinterpretation of traditional epic motifs. Knox 1986: 51–64 discusses Orpheus' song in *Met*. 10 more completely.

20. Notice here that Orpheus' earlier rejection of the chaining of Cerberus now identifies him with the unknown man who turned to stone at the sight of the chained Cerberus—yet another metapoetic statement corresponding to his earlier lamentation. Far from being the epic hero, Orpheus is turned into the ultimate passive figure—one whose nature renders him incapable of speech of any kind.

21. See Hardie 2002: 81, who connects metamorphosis and funerary commemoration: "The dead person himself ceases to exist, but enjoys survival of a kind, through modes of both continuity and transformation: continuity, through the memory-images stored in the minds of those who knew him in life; transformation, in the surrogate existence of funeral memorial and funeral inscription."

22. See also Hardie 2002: 81 and Vernant 1991: 161–62.

23. Note here Ovid's witty play on *munus* as meaning both food and funerary offering, used to render Orpheus' kinship with his dead wife. Orpheus is cast as an unburied dead body, deprived of the prescribed *munus* and covered in squalor (*squalidus*). In other words, he lacks the care normally bestowed on the dead by the family members.

24. Tarrant 2004 marks lines 205–08 as spurious. Anderson 1972 and Bömer 1980: 82–83, however, consider the lines genuine. Either way, even if we accept only line 204 as genuine, the phrase *haerebis in ore* suggests Apollo's poetry as the means through which Hyacinthus will be commemorated. On the uniqueness of *haerebis in ore*, see Bömer 1980: 83.

25. Notice here the use of *imitatio,* which is similar to Apollo's words to Hyacinthus in *Met*. 10.206, *imitabere*. In both instances the emphasis seems to be in the medium of representation of the mourning.

26. Orpheus' song comprises the rest of the book. As scholars have long noted (e.g. Knox 1986: 48–64, Segal 1989: 81–85), its themes encompass the fragility of love. Mourning and lamentation, sometimes fraught with ironies (Venus) or tinged by humor (Cyparissus), emerge as a constant among many of these stories, especially in those of Cyparissus, Hyacinthus, and Adonis, with Venus' lamentation as an *aition* for the festival of Adonia closing the book (see Hardie 2002: 65–66; 92–93). Venus' perpetual mourning is also important in view of the prospective death of Julius Caesar (Hardie 2002: 69–70, esp. n.16). Knox 1986: 51–52 discusses the connections between Apollo's lament for Hyacinthus and Venus' for Adonis. For a narratological analysis of Venus and Adonis, see Pavlock 2009: 91–103.

27. See also Hardie 2002: 65–66.

28. The book opens in a similar way, juxtaposing Orpheus' poetic power as a force of nature with the maenads' rage (*Met*. 11.1–5).

29. Both Tarrant 2004 and Anderson 1982 print *theatri*. Since the military metaphor is at work, the reading *triumphi* is attractive.

30. Bömer 1980: 243: "'*infractus* . . . ist also hier 'aduncus', 'gebrochen' wie 'gebogen.'" He compares it with 4.181 *inflexo Berecyntia tibia cornu*.

31. *Plausus* may be describing either the action of striking with the palm of the hand (OLD s.v. 1) or the clapping of hands (OLD s.v. 2).

32. Murphy 1972: 44. See also Bömer 1980: 243 "Der Hiat hat deutlich onomatopoietischen Charakter" and compares it with Verg. *A*. 4.667 and 9.477.

33. The punishment of the daughters of Minyas by Bacchus in Ov. *Met*. 4.389–415 demonstrates the problematic nature of the opposite behavior: the women refuse the feminine Bacchic exit but stay at home and encroach on the role of the poet/narrator.

34. Orpheus is also denied burial (11.50–51), another triumph for all that women represent. Knox 1986: 49 correctly suggests that nature's lament for the death of Eurydice (Verg. *Geo*. 4.460–63) is part of the traditional motif of the lament for the death of the poet, which Vergil also used in *Ecl*. 5.27–28. Ovid makes use of the same *topos*, but for Orpheus' death, as Knox observes.

35. Bacchic rites often are accompanied by military imagery as early as Euripides (*Ba*. 25; 51–52; and 302–05: Ἄρεώς τε μοῖραν μεταλαβὼν ἔχει τινά· / στρατὸν γὰρ ἐν ὅπλοις ὄντα κἀπὶ τάξεσιν / φόβος διεπτόησε πρὶν λόγχης θιγεῖν· / μανία δὲ καὶ τοῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ Διονύσου πάρα [He has also taken some share of Ares; for when an army is outfitted and drawn up for battle, fear seizes them before they touch their spear; this madness too comes from Dionysus]).

36. The link to the elegiac motif of the *militia amoris* in this context is of course obvious.

37. On Orpheus as a surrogate for Ovid, see Pavlock 2009: 106–9.

Chapter 8 • A New Hope

1. This is more along the lines of the role of burial and lamentation at the end of the *Iliad* but quite dissimilar to the *Aeneid*. On women's roles and burial in the *Aeneid*, see Panoussi 2009: 145–73.

2. On the epic's ending, see Braund 1996, Fantham 1999, Dietrich 1999, Pagán 2000, McNelis 2007: 152–77, Augoustakis 2010: 87–91, Bessone 2011: 128–99.

3. In Hom. *Il*. 6.297–311 the Trojan women supplicate Pallas Athena, who denies their request. In Verg. *A*. 1.479–82 there is an allusion to that scene and a similar one, this time in Latium, takes place in *A*. 11.477–85.

4. For an analysis of the passage from the point of view of women's "otherness," see Augoustakis 2010: 30–91.

5. Much has been written on the problem of religious disorder in the *Thebaid*. Recent discussions include Bessone 2013 and Bernstein 2013.

6. Murnaghan 1999: 204. See also the discussion in chapter 6:87–88.

7. Alston and Spentzou 2011: 73. McAuley 2016: 316–21 analyzing Ide's lament in *Thebaid* 3, argues that female laments "often explicitly reinforce epic values rather than challenge them, lamenting the lack of opportunity for martial *uirtus* at Thebes rather than criticizing its militaristic underpinnings" (318). For McAuley, ritual fails to restore civic norms, although the author does not discuss the epic's ending. These readings, however, assume a narrow definition of ritual and do not recognize its capacity to express the destabilizing or transgressive aspects of grief.

8. Alston and Spentzou (2011: 72) reach the same conclusion from a Lacanian perspective, but eventually argue that the texts they examine (Lucan, Statius, and Pliny) display a repeated failure of ritual "and the impossibility of language as a container of the Real." They contend that grief can result in social unity not through ritual but from "a recognition and a sharing of emotion that exists outside and in opposition to social convention."

9. On the special meaning of Clementia in Statius, see Burgess 1972, Vessey 1973: 309–12, Ahl 1986: 2890–92, Feeney 1991: 361–62, Braund 1996: 9–12, Ganiban 2007: 214–24, Coffee 2009: 232–36, Bessone 2011: 102–35, 2013.

10. Ahl 1986: 2893 notes that the lament is here described as barbaric and incomprehensible, not because the women are foreigners but because they are changed into birds that cannot speak.

11. The transgressive qualities of Argia's behavior are noted by Lovatt 1999: 136–40 and Alston and Spentzou 2011: 84–87.

12. Pollmann 2004: 137 translates *funus* as "corpse" and offers several parallels as support.

13. On the simile of Argia as Ceres (12.270–77), see Lovatt 1999: 141–42.

14. Argia and Antigone are united in the act of burial: *socio conamine*, 411; their unity poignantly contrasts with the brothers' divisiveness in death: *hoc nupta precatur,/ hoc soror*, 445–46.

15. Noted by Lovatt 1999: 144 and Fantham 1999: 230–31.

16. Pollmann 2004: 277–78 offers examples of similar use of Bacchic cult as military metaphor. See also my discussion on military metaphors in descriptions of maenadic behavior in chapter 7:97–101.

17. On the triumph of Dionysus as mythical precedent for the Roman *triumphus*, see Hardie 1997:153–54. On the women's lamentation and its connection with the Roman triumph, see also Fantham 1999: 231 and below, n.19.

18. Hardie 1997: 154 sees it as "seriously infringing the integrationist thrust of triumph and funeral as closural rituals," while Braund 1996: 5 argues that it serves to dissolve the boundaries that separated the two sides, Argive and Theban. See also Pollmann 2004: 278–79.

19. Fantham 1999: 231 interprets these lines as expressing a reliving of the epic rather than a rival version, a kind of "weird triumph."

20. Argia, who intends to do the same for Polynices, complains that she is too late. Deipyle's kiss may also be read quite differently: the use of *iacens*, a word that can also connote sexual proximity, here describes Deipyle's embrace of the body of her dead husband. Henderson 1993: 187 draws attention to the peculiarity of the use of *iacens* but does not comment on it. I believe that the word underscores the irony of her lying next to a corpse while hinting at Deipyle's perhaps exceedingly strong attachment to her husband. On Deipyle's love for Tydeus, see also Pollmann 2004: 282.

21. For Lovatt 1999: 138, Argia "is an alternative hero for the end of the text."

22. On the positive role of Theseus, see Burgess 1972: 347–49, Vessey 1973: 312–16, Braund 1996: 12–16, Ganiban 2007: 219–32, Bessone 2011: 128–99.

23. Lovatt 1999: 136. On the problematic aspects of Theseus as a model ruler, see also Ahl 1986: 2893–98, Dominik 1994: 96–97, Coffee 2009: 232–36.

24. When Theseus first appears in the text as a triumphant victor, he is returning to Athens from his conquest of the Amazons. See Dietrich 1999: 45. The women as suppliants are in a position of helplessness and therefore resemble the defeated, while the triumphal procession of the captive Amazons causes them to remember their dead husbands (541–42). In this context, the great disparity between the conqueror and the helpless underscores Theseus' warlike nature and absolute power. It is no coincidence that Evadne addresses him as *belliger Aegide*, 546.

25. The funerals conducted by the men at the book's opening show their failure to perform burial. They fight over who will perform the rites (33–34); they are unable to recognize the bodies of their loved ones (35–37); they indulge in excessive lamentation (45); and they commit the religious crime of not permitting burial to the fallen warriors of the enemy, which perpetuates the division initiated by conflict (54–56). Creon's funeral rites in honor of his dead son Menoeceus similarly transgress ritual norms, as the bereaved father in his raging grief sacrifices living Argives on his son's pyre (68–70), reasserts his decision not to allow burial for the enemy (100–103), and acts in complete isolation (79), providing a sharp contrast with the collective unity of the women.

26. The connection between the women's lament and Statius' own voice is noted by Fantham 1999: 231–32. Dietrich 1999: 49–50 argues that Statius brings a feminine way of memorialization to the forefront and thus presents his own epic as marginalized. Pagán 2000: 447 notes that Statius' use of lamentation directs his poem into the future, a process analogous to narratives on the aftermath of battles. Augoustakis 2010: 86–91 argues that the Argive women as mourners are relegated to the margins of the poem, "where women can safely mourn for their dead, outside the male world of the poem. The boundaries of epic are defined, as the poet will trespass into the territory of elegy, should he pursue their woes further" (89).

27. Augoustakis 2016: 288 argues that Statius silences the women at the end of his poem, consolidating thus the boundaries of the epic narrative and pointing to the futility of the peace between Thebes and Argos by alluding to the Epigonoi.

28. On ritual and closure in the *Iliad*, see Seaford 1994: 70–73.

Chapter 9 • Bacchic Rites in Greece and Rome

1. Scholars believe that the word *di-wo-nu-so* in Linear B tablets (tablet KH Gq 5) is evidence of the worship of Dionysus from Mycenaean times, as early as 1500–1100 BCE (Hallager et al. 1992, esp. 76–78). One of the earliest inscriptions dedicated to Dionysus on Italian soil is from 800 BCE. See Mac Góráin 2017: 324. On Dionysus in Greece and Rome and particularly in Vergil, see also Panoussi 2009: 118–21.

2. See, for instance, Segal 1997: 7–26, Seaford 1996: 30–35.

3. On Dionysus' feminine appearance, see, for example, E. *Ba*. 453–59; on the fierceness of his revenge, see, e.g., *Homeric Hymns* 7; E. *Ba*., esp. 677–774.

4. On Dionysus in art, see, e.g., Carpenter 1997.

5. E. *Ba*. 686–87.

6. On these issues, see Seaford 1996: 36–37, Goff 2004: 214–17; 271–79.

7. We also know of two other Dionysiac festivals in Athens, the Lenaia and the Anthesteria. During the Lenaia, dramatic performances took place, as well as a procession of the god's cult statue. On Athenian festivals and the theater, see Rehm 1992: 15–19.

8. See Seaford 2006 for a recent general treatment of Dionysus. On Dionysus and tragedy, the bibliography is vast. The most important works are, in my view, Segal 1997, Winkler and Zeitlin 1990, and Seaford 1994, 1996.

9. For a succinct but thorough introduction to Dionysus in Rome, see Mac Góráin 2017. On the Liberalia, see Miller 2002.

10. See Augustine's *C.D*. 7.21. Scholars, however, are not entirely in agreement whether Augustine's information conflates Greek and Roman customs or whether Roman customs were similar to Greek ones from an early date. See Panoussi 2009: 119, Mac Góráin 2017: 327–28.

11. Burkert 1987: 22–23.

12. On our sources for Bacchic mysteries in Greece, see Seaford 1996: 39–44.

13. This is not surprising, since the rites were secret. Pagán 2004: 56–59 outlines the similarities between ritual initiation and conspiracy and discusses the potential role of slaves in the cult during the years of the Roman Republic.

14. See also Schultz's (2006: 85–87) discussion of the *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus*. The spectacular frescoes of the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii are another important source, although an enigmatic one. Scholars tend to agree that they represent scenes from initiation into the mystery cult. See, e.g. Burkert 1987: 95–96 and Seaford 1981. On Bacchus, the Villa of the Mysteries, and wedding ritual, see Panoussi 2003: 107.

15. The same is true of the cult of Isis, which similarly is primarily associated with women in literature, but epigraphical evidence indicates that men were also participants in her cult. See my discussion in chapter 3:40–43.

16. This word is translated as *ululatus* in Latin.

17. *Kiste* (*ciste* or *cista* in Latin) is a basket covered with a lid; *liknon* is a winnowing basket.

18. See my discussion in chapter 10:135–39 on murder (*caedes*) and illicit sexual acts (*stuprum*) in Livy's narrative.

Chapter 10 • Roman Bacchae

1. On the relationship between the *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* and Livy's account, see Pagán 2004: 51–53, where she also cites the relevant bibliography. On the *SC* and gender roles in the middle Republic, see Flower 2002. Schultz 2006: 82 argues that "literary and archaeological evidence contradicts several elements of Livy's story, such as his contention that the Bacchic rites had only recently been introduced to Italy and that they were unknown to most Romans." On the historicity of the people mentioned in the episode, see Rousselle 1989.

2. On the historicity of Livy's text, see Gruen 1990, Takács 2000, Flower 2000, 2002, Schultz 2006: 82–93. On the episode's literary aspects, see Scafuro 1989, Walsh 1996, Wiseman 1998, Flower 2000, Pagán 2004: 50–67, Nousek 2010.

3. Pagán 2004: 54–55 points out that conspiracy was not a criminal offense in 186 BCE and suggests that senatorial prejudice appears to be the root behind the strong reaction against the cult.

4. As we have seen in chapter 9, there is evidence that men participated extensively in the celebration of the cult. See, e.g., Schultz 2006: 82–93. Schultz argues that despite Livy's claims, the gender of those involved in the cult was not the primary motivation behind the Senate's action (83) and that the participation of women in the cult does not automatically render it subversive (84). Schultz's arguments are extremely convincing. The present chapter concentrates on Livy's text, however, and seeks to delve into the reasons for the representation of the cult as entirely under the control of women, suppressing the authoritative roles of men therein.

5. Words such as *pudicitia*, *pudor*, and the verb *pudeo*, are only mentioned four times in the entire episode (39.8.6, *pudoris*; 39.10.4, *pudicitiam*; 39.15.12, *pudeat*; and 39.15.14, *pudicitia*), an indication, in my opinion, of its absence from the morals of the celebrants of the Bacchic mysteries. Langlands 2006: 115–22 discusses the moral value of *pudicitia* articulated in this episode.

6. Livy surely used the word *quiritantium* because of its similarity to *Quirites*, the word denoting Roman citizens "collectively in their peacetime functions" (*OLD* s.v. 1).

7. This representation of Hispala as morally upright conforms to comedy's inversion of norms, where the clever slave, not the free characters, is the upholder of the moral code. See also my discussion chapter 10:126–30.

8. Pagán 2004: 61 correctly notes that Hispala's name indicates a Spanish origin and implies that she is associated with foreign ways.

9. No specific reasons are given for Duronia's choice. The text simply states that the mother was devoted to her husband (*et mater dedita uiro erat*, 39.9.3). By precluding any coercion or fear of the husband on the part of Duronia, the narrative invites the reader to ascribe her actions to an inherent moral turpitude.

10. *Labes* generally means "disaster, ruin" (OLD s.v. 2), or "stain upon honor, disgrace" (OLD s.v. 5), but it is also used to denote a physical defect (OLD s.v. 3). In later Latin it comes to mean "sickness" (L&S s.v.). Scafuro 1989: 130–31 connects this motif with the narrative's deployment of the motifs of space and quarantine. See also Briscoe 2008: 253.

11. For example, Pliny extols Arria as a model mother and wife, taking care of her sick relatives (*Ep.* 3.16).

12. Walsh 1996: 195 notes that this is "suspicious" and probably part of the dramatic elements in the narrative.

13. According to Walsh 1996: 198, the name Sulpicia is fictional, likely introduced at an early stage of the story to invest the character with appropriate dignity.

14. See 39.10.7 and 39.13.5: Hispala's fear of the Bacchants; 39.11.7: Aebutia's tears as she makes her case to Postumius; 39.12.5: Hispala's fear and shock to be in the presence of Postumius. Pagán 2004: 65 interprets Hispala's reluctance to speak as a way to achieve narrative delay. On Livy's use of suspense and other narrative techniques to achieve the emotional involvement of the reader in his narrative, see Pausch 2011: 213–23.

15. One can certainly argue that leaving him an inheritance is also characteristic of a parent, but my point here is that the roles of mother and wife are conflated in the person of Hispala.

16. As Scafuro 1989: 129 rightly notes: "Hispala . . . is a perfect witness for the State—even as she is a perfect narrator for the tale—precisely because of the marginality and fluidity of her status. As a former slave, she appears free of guilt, and as a witness and narrator, she can win her inquisitors' sympathy as well as our own."

17. On tragic and comic elements in Hispala's depiction, see Scafuro 1989: 130–31.

18. On Roman comedy and ideology, see by contrast Richlin 2014a, who argues that Roman comedy's slaves do not represent Roman elite consciousness but that of the actors performing the plays, who were mostly foreign slaves.

19. Langlands 2006: 118 rightly observes that Hispala's account of her participation in the cult while still a slave emphasizes that only the free "have something to lose from involvement in the Bacchanalia."

20. See Scafuro 1989: 129 on the comic paradigm and status: "At its beginning, when the State is in disarray, moral character does not coincide with status, but is, instead, independent of it. . . . In accordance with the comic paradigm, however, character and status finally should coincide. At the end of the story the Senate will confer what nature is discovered to have conferred at birth in the comic paradigm."

21. See Duronia's instructions to Aebutius regarding the initiation: *decem dierum castimonia opus esse: decimo die cenatum, deinde pure lautum in sacrarium deducturam*, Liv. 39.9.4 ([she said that] abstinence was necessary for ten days and that on the tenth day she would lead him to the banquet and the sanctuary after a purificatory bath).

22. Postumius' speech and the whole episode focus on the women's control of the ritual. Surprisingly, then, later on in the description of the arrests, we learn that the leaders of the cult are male: *capita autem coniurationis constabat esse M. et C. Atinios de plebe Romana, et Faliscum L. Opicernium, et Minium Cerrinium Campanum; ab iis omnia facinora et flagitia orta, eos maximos sacerdotes conditoresque eius sacri esse*, 39.17.6–7 (it was agreed that the heads of the conspiracy were M. and C. Atinius of the Roman plebs and the Faliscan L. Opicernius and the Campanian Minius Cerrinius; all the crimes and disgraceful acts came from them, these were the highest priests and founders of this cult).

23. *Stuprum* is mentioned ten times in the Bacchanalian narrative: 39.8.7, 39.8.8, 39.10.7, 39.13.10, 39.13.13, 39.13.14, 39.14.8, 39.15.9, 39.15.14, 39.18.4.

24. The word order also visually reflects the placement of religion under the control of the pleasures of wine and banquets in the expression *additae uoluptates religioni uini et epularum*.

25. There is a *lacuna* in the text here, and various emendations have been proposed. See *apparatus criticus ad loc*. in Walsh 1999.

26. For the antiquity of such laws dating from Romulus' time, see FIRA², vol. 1, p. 3 and Lefkowitz 2006: 94. See also Verg. *A*. 1.737 with Servius' comment. On that passage, see Panoussi 2009: 99. On women and wine in Roman society, see, e.g., Bettini 1995a and 1995b and Russell 2003.

27. 39.13.10–11: *permixti uiri feminis* (men mingling with women); *plura uirorum inter sese quam feminarum stupra esse* (there were more disgraceful acts among men than among women); 39.14.7: *sacerdotes eorum sacrorum, seu uiri seu feminae essent* (whether the priests of these rites were men or women); 39.15.9: *simillimi feminis mares* (men very much resembling women).

28. The narrator's words that describe the prayer preceding the consul's address to the people (*sollemne carmen precationis*, 39.15.1 [a solemn prayer]) are repeated by Postumius in direct speech: *sollemnis deorum comprecatio*, 39.15.2 [a solemn prayer to the gods]). Once more, the speakers of the episode echo the narrator's point of view.

29. Briscoe 2008: 272 sees the phrase *furialibus stimulis* as an allusion to the *oistros* that drove on the Bacchants.

30. Pagán 2004: 58 offers a succinct and useful overview of the different scholarly views on the meaning of *stuprum*.

31. Of the episode's ten references to *stuprum*, see above, n.23. Three (13.10, 13.13, 13.14) are found in Hispala's speech to Postumius (given in indirect speech), while two (15.9, 15.14) are in Postumius' (direct) speech to the Senate. More than half then are uttered by characters, with Hispala echoing the narrator's views, and Postumius Hispala's.

32. In 39.8.8, a passage quoted earlier (chapter 10:124), *stuprum* appears as forcibly inflicted on the participants: *cum per uim stuprum inferatur*. In many other instances of the word in the episode, the accompanying verb is either *patior* (39.13.13 *stuprum pati*; 39.13.14 *stupri patientes*) or other passive verbs (39.14.8 *stuprum inferretur*; 39.15.9 *stuprati*). There is only one reference of *stuprum* connected with an active form, 39.15.9 *constupratores*. Adams 1982: 201 also notes that often, if not always, it denotes a forcible violation.

33. Williams 2010: 122 observes that Postumius remarks on the damaged masculinity of the young initiates. However, Williams also claims that Postumius' argument focuses on the active forms of *stuprum* (which are actually fewer than the passive ones, as noted above) and argues that there is a shift in the emphasis from the victims to the penetrators. Williams also states that "when this shift occurs, their crime is represented as being an instance of undifferentiated *stuprum* or a violation of traditional standards of military discipline." I believe that Williams underplays the polluting quality of homosexuality in Livy's text.

34. Langlands 2006: 120 rightly observes that "although Postumius' speech emphasises that it is from women that the forces of evil originate, it is men who play the pivotal role in promulgating the corruption."

35. Pagán 2004: 56–61 argues that the practice of *stuprum* renders the subject servile and therefore affects citizen males. Pagán draws a connection between the cult's erasure of the distinction between male and female on the one hand and freedom and slavery on the other.

36. See also 39.15.9–10: *deinde simillimi feminis mares, stuprati et constupratores fanatici, uigiliis uino strepitibus clamoribusque nocturnis attoniti. Nullas adhuc uires coniuratio, ceterum incrementum ingens uirium habet, quod in dies plures fiunt* (then the males become very much like the women, committing and submitting to the most obscene sexual acts, frenzied by staying up late, by wine, the uproar and shouts of the night. The conspiracy does not yet have any strength, but still it has a vast surge of strength, because they become more numerous by the day).

37. By contrast to the women-controlled nocturnal ritual activity, which is perilous for young men, Hispala's relationship with Aebutius is cast under the glow of a positive idealism, even though in reality the sexual involvement and resulting dependence of Aebutius to Hispala would have been frowned upon as potentially damaging, especially given Hispala's status as a *scortum* and a former slave. Her age would render her even more undesirable, because she would be capable of exercising undue influence on Aebutius. Livy, however, carefully purges his narrative of any such negative light on the couple's relationship. There is no hint of lack of *pudicitia* in the relationship between Aebutius and Hispala.

38. As Langlands 2006: 120–21 argues, *pudicitia* is a vital attribute of the male Roman citizen, since it pertains to his physical integrity against sexual penetration. For Langlands, the *pudicitia* of a man is the same as that of a woman, except that a woman is permitted to be sexually submissive to her husband.

39. Scafuro observes that *corruptela* is a diminutive form, an instance of comic diction (1989: 125). This use can then be explained as evidence of Livy's patronizing humor, as in the case of Hispala's characterization.

40. 39.8.6: *corruptelae primum omnis generis fieri coeptae* (all kinds of corruption first began to be practiced); 39.9.4, *uia una corruptela Bacchanalia erant* (one method of corruption was the Bacchanalia). Notice that 39.10.6 echoes the first instance: *scire* corruptelarum omnis generis *eam officinam esse*. See also the discussion of the passage above.

41. Briscoe 2008: 284 notes that only husbands with *in manu* marriage or a male relative with *patria potestas* over the woman had the right of life or death. Briscoe also points out that "while individual instances of exaction of the death penalty by holders of *patria potestas* are attested throughout the Republic . . . , execution on this scale, so coldly reported by L[ivy], is without parallel."

42. Interestingly, the extensive killing of participants is not followed by a full suppression of the cult: the state is interested in controlling it rather than destroying it. This also demonstrates that the issue here is one of control rather than the questionable nature of cult practices, despite the narrative's objections to the content of the cult. See also Gruen 1990: 75–76.

43. Gruen 1990: 76 considers this number suspect.

44. Burkert 1998: 380 suggests that the strong condemnation of same-sex relations in Livy's text reflects Augustus' views on morality and accords with his program of moral reform.

Chapter 11 • Philomela's Bacchic Justice

1. See Segal 1994, Pavlock 1991, and Joplin 1984.

2. On the myth and its history in literature and art, see Gantz 1993: 239–41. See also chapter 7:92–93, chapter 8:106.

3. Anderson 1972: 220, 236. Segal 1994: 270 also notes the absence of divine justice in the episode. In 1994: 270 n.25 he observes further that Philomela's prayers are met with divine indifference in 6.526, 542–43, and 548). See also Schmidt 1991: 123–24. Pavlock 1991: 35 notes the absence of traditional marriage deities from the wedding scene.

4. *Hac aue coniuncti Procne Tereusque, parentes/ hac aue sunt facti*, 6.433–34 (with such an omen Procne and Tereus were united, they were made parents/ with such an omen).

5. Pavlock 1991: 38–39, Raval 1998: 118, 120–21. Tarrant 2004 marks 6.537–38 as interpolated, but Anderson 1982 prints them as genuine.

6. On *dextrarum iunctio* as ritual gesture, see chapter 1:18.

7. Oliensis 2009: 81–88 argues that the episode may be read as an allegory for political *libertas* and connects Philomela to Cicero and Lucretia.

8. Oliensis 2009: 81–82 notes Philomela's unconventional outspokenness in this speech.

9. Pavlock 1991: 41 suggests that Philomela is here mourning her symbolic death.

10. Tarrant 2004 prints 6.532 as spurious. His latest thoughts in the issue: "Since I was convinced that 537–38 are interpolated, and since interpolations sometimes cluster in a particular part of the text (as I think has happened in the description of the plague on Aegina in book 7), I may have been inclined to see a second interpolation in the vicinity. All in all, I would regard 532 as somewhat less obviously interpolated than 537–8; if I were re-editing the text now, I might consider confining my suspicions to the apparatus" (personal communication). Bömer 1976 and Anderson 1972 accept the line as genuine. See also Bömer 1976: 147.

11. See, for example, Euryalus' mother (Verg. *A*. 9.478). The mourner's state of mind is usually disturbed or close to madness because of excessive grief. See, for instance, Loraux 1998: 9–28, for a discussion of the "pleasure of tears" and the ways in which the *threnos* may present a problem for civic order. See also the discussion of mourning practices and attitudes, with bibliography, in chapter 6.

12. *Conscius* is also used to describe someone with knowledge of a crime or an accessory to a crime (OLD s.v.2). So Philomela's humanizing of the rocks and the claim that they will be in sympathy with her renders them witnesses in what she imagines to be a quasi-legal procedure. See also Anderson 1972: 222. By contrast, Procne dismisses lamentation as inefficient (*non est lacrimis hoc . . . agendum,/ sed ferro*, 6.611–12 [we should not act with tears but with the sword]) and is empowered to claim justice through the assumption of the identity of the maenad, on which see below.

13. Note that Philomela's surprising empowerment allows her to reject the shame she feels for her rape (*pudore/ proiecto tua facta loquar*, 6.544–45). On this line, see also Oliensis 2009: 81–82.

14. See Joplin 1984: 44; Pavlock 1991: 43.

15. Anderson 1972: 229 notes that "the profusion of short clauses and verbs, as well as the series of dactyls, emphasizes the wild speed and activity of Procne."

16. One may also read in this juxtaposition a hint of mirroring between Procne's violence and that of Tereus, prefiguring the brutality of the women's revenge. It is also of particular interest that Procne is described as *terribilis* and *agitata furiis doloris*, phrases that evoke Aeneas' anger at the moment of the killing of Turnus (*furiis accensus et ira/terribilis*, Verg. *A*. 12.946–47). Notice that the word *terribilis* is placed in the same metrical *sedes* in both texts. This type of intertextual contact helps boost the argument that Tereus' and Procne's actions have political implications in addition to familial and social.

17. A similar development can be seen in Euripides' *Bacchae*, where the removal of the women of the household to Mount Cithaeron under the spell of Bacchic frenzy sets in train the killing of Pentheus, the exile of Cadmus and Agave, and the destruction of the Theban royal family. The episode also appropriates elements from other texts: the brutality of Hecuba's revenge on Polymestor in Euripides' *Hecuba* and the Bacchic ritual conducted by Amata in Verg. *A*. 7.373–405. See also Segal 1994: 270–71; 274; 277. Amata is similarly in a state of frenzy and fakes a Bacchic ecstasy (*simulato numine Bacchi*, 7.385) in order to negate her husband's authority to decide their daughter's betrothal. Procne, like Amata, does not perform the Bacchic rites alone but is accompanied by other women. Just as Procne kidnaps Philomela, so Amata kidnaps her daughter, Lavinia, hides her in the mountains (*A*. 7.387), and dedicates her to Bacchus (*A*. 7.389–90). This action is an attempt to negate permanently Lavinia's future role as bride of Aeneas (see Panoussi 2009: 124–38).

18. These are vexed lines: some editors read *Tereo* (Anderson 1972, 1977, Bömer 1976) and others *Terei* (Tarrant 2004, Slater 1927, Shackleton Bailey 1981). There seems to be some ambiguity in the implied object of *degeneras*, although editors understand Pandion to be the object. See also Shackleton Bailey 1981: 332–33.

19. *Patrii moris sacrum mentita*, 6.648 (lying about a ritual meal after the ancestral custom); Pavlock 1991: 44.

20. See Richlin 1992a: 163–64.

Chapter 12 • *Hypsipyle's Bacchic* Pietas

1. Scholars agree that Valerius' narrative is earlier. See Vessey 1973: 178 and Gibson 2004: 171–72n.1 with bibliography.

2. Vessey 1973:165–87 offers a comparative analysis of the two episodes. Dominik 1997 compares Apollonius', Valerius', and Statius' versions. On the Bacchic motif in Valerius and Statius, see also Chinn 2013: 329–31.

3. On Valerius' episode in general, see Garson 1964: 272–76, Adamietz 1976: 31–36, Vessey 1985, Aricò 1991, Schimann 1997: 106–13, Hershkowitz 1998: 136–46.

4. As scholars have long noted, some of the episodes that Valerius mobilizes are Dido's frenzy and the role of the figure of Fama (*A*. 4.173–97); the women's revolt and setting fire of the ships (*A*. 5.604–99); the havoc the Fury Allecto wreaks on the Trojans and the Latins; and the Bacchic frenzy of Amata and the Latin mothers (*A*. 7.341–474), as well as Aeneas' rescue of Anchises from burning Troy (*A*. 2.707–34).

5. See, for instance, Hershkowitz 1998: 136–38 and Vessey 1985: 335n.34. Vessey 1985: 335 argues that the phrase *decus et patriae laus* (VF 2.243) indicates Hypsipyle's status as a virtuous woman.

6. See the very pertinent points that Vessey 1985: 336 makes on Hypsipyle's recognition in VF 2.250–51 of the danger that she presents to Thoas. Chinn 2013: 331, however, points out that Thoas' escape to Italy is explicitly mentioned and that Hypsipyle is "unambiguously praised."

7. Pentheus' dismemberment by his mother and her sisters in Euripides' *Bacchae* is the most famous instance. On the practices of *sparagmos* and *omophagia*, see Dodds 1960: xvi-xx.

8. The Argonauts can also provide offspring to populate the island and ensure the continuity of the community's existence. This is an important reason for the women's favorable reception of them (see also the discussion on Polyxo's speech in Statius below: 159–62).

9. The depiction of the women as Furies is also present in Euripides' *Hypsipyle* (οἷά τε Γοργάδες ἐν λέκτροις ἔκανον εὐνέτας [they killed their husbands in bed like the Gorgads], fr. 64.77–78 Bond). It is hard to determine, however, whether this likening of the women to Furies is by now a *topos* describing women's collective aggression or it is specifically linked with Euripides' play. On the Lemnian women's depiction as Furies, see also Schimann 1997: 106–13. On the role of Polyxo in Valerius, including her connection to Hypsipyle, see Finkmann 2015: §§13–26 and §§40–47.

10. This motif is also inspired by *Aeneid* 4, where Dido's madness is likened to Bacchic frenzy (4.300–04; 469–70) and *Aeneid* 7, where Amata's frenzy is inspired by the Fury Allecto and is expressed as a fake Bacchic rite (7.385–400). On the episode's intertextual debt to Verg. *A*., see Keith 2000: 94–95. On maenadism in the *A*., see Panoussi 2009: 115–44.

11. Compare the description of the Ciconian women and the discussion in chapter 7: 97–101. Notice the placement of *armata* between *pias . . . manus* which visually "contains" Hypsipyle's aggressiveness, conveyed through the use of *armata*. The same happens a little later with *audacia*, a word with aggressive connotations (*piis audacia coeptis*, 264; compare OLD s.v. 2). Similarly, there is a suggestive repetition of *audeo* and its cognates in this passage: *ausi,* 280; *audit*, 283. Another possibly related double meaning can be found in Hypsipyle's praise: *ingentibus ausis*, 242.

12. The metaphor of the thyrsus as spear is already established in Euripides' *Bacchae* (e.g. 25, 51–52, 762–64). On the connection between Ares and Bacchus, see E. *Ba*. 302–05. See also Seaford 1996: 210–11.

13. See, e.g., Poortvliet 1991: 142 and Schimann 1997: 106–13. Buckley 2013: 86–89 reads Venus' intervention as a tragedy, an imitation of Euripides' *Bacchae*, a clash of genres within the epic.

14. On Venus as Fury, see Schimann 1997: 106–08. On the role of Venus in Valerius more generally, see Elm von der Osten 2007: 18–52. See also Hardie 1993: 43–44, Keith 2000: 94–95, Buckley 2013: 83.

15. On Fama in this episode and the complex intertextuality therein, see Hardie 2012: 196–201.

16. A common phrase indicating the leader of Bacchic rites. See, e.g., Verg. *A*. 7.397, *ipsa inter medias*, describing Amata. On women's collective action in the *Aeneid*, see Keith 2006.

17. *Lumina* is first in the line in enjambment, thus emphasizing the importance of Venus' gaze. I believe that the passage's allusion to Dido's status as a metaphorical Bacchant is part of a sustained effort to cast the Lemnian women as a collective version of Dido. For instance, the women are said to kiss their doorposts and beds in lamentation (VF 2.167–69) in the manner of Dido in *A*. 4.648–50. Also, in this passage the women's gaze onto the sea (*aequora cunctae/prospiciunt*, VF 2.187–88) recalls Dido's gazing on the sea in *A*. 4.584–90. On similarities between Dido and Hypsipyle, see also Dietrich 2004: 7–9.

18. The use of *diras . . . taedas* is significant, as *Dira* is one of the Latin terms for *Fury*.

19. E. g. Discordia, 2.204; Ira, 2.205. Let us not forget the association of Ira and the Furies with the Dirae, whose etymology the ancients consider as deriving from the phrase *deum ira*. See Verg. *A*. 4.178. In VF 2.208, Venus is called *Mauortia coniunx*, which emphasizes her connection with war. Compare the reference to Bellona in VF 2.228. See also Spaltenstein 2002: 370.

20. Spaltenstein 2002: 371.

21. Dominik 1997: 39 argues that Valerius emphasizes Hypsipyle's human response based on the principle of *pietas* rather than attributing her actions to divine interference.

22. We are not told what kind of garment Hypsipyle uses, but note the etymological connection between *obnubere* and the verb *nubere*, used of women, "to get married" (OLD s.v.).

23. See Poortvliet 1991: 176–77: The priest of the shrine of Diana at Aricia was called the *rex nemorensis*. According to legend, any new priest of the shrine must slay his predecessor. Runaways found asylum there. See Ov. *F*. 3.259–76. Valerius is the only one who presents this version regarding Thoas' fate. See also Masciadri 2004: 226.

24. On Thoas' probable fainting, see Poortvliet 1991: 153. Spaltenstein 2002: 378 disagrees.

25. The only active verbs associated with Thoas are *latet* (258) and *fugit* (300), verbs that indicate weakness or cowardice. The Lemnian king is significantly more passive than Anchises in the *Aeneid*, who time and again is useful to Aeneas because of his ability to interpret omens and offer prophecies.

26. Waardenburg corrected *chorus* to *tholus* (Poortvliet 1991: 156), and many others follow him, including Mozley 1936. Poortvliet 1991: 156 and Spaltenstein 2002: 379–80 defend *chorus* but recognize its difficulties. Liberman 1997 also prints *chorus*. See discussion in the section of this chapter entitled "The 'Initiation' of Thoas."

27. On the difficulty of this reading, see Poortvliet 1991: 157, Spaltenstein 2002: 380. Liberman 1997 follows them and prints *tigres* also. See discussion in the section of this chapter entitled "The 'Initiation' of Thoas."

28. *Rapere* is used twice to refer to Hypsipyle's movement of Thoas. In 2.255 (cited above) and in 2.289: *huc genitorem altae per opaca silentia noctis/praecipitem siluis rapit* [there she seizes her father headlong from the woods through the dark silence of the night], again a type of kidnapping, where Thoas appears to have no agency. The verb is also used in passive form (2.273) to describe the movement of Hypsipyle herself.

29. Poortvliet 1991: 155 compares this sacred robe with the *peplos* on Athena's statue in the Parthenon and Spaltenstein 2002: 379 notes that the custom of dressing statues is well-known.

30. Spaltenstein 2002: 381, Poortvliet 1991:160.

31. Hypsipyle places the disguised Thoas in a chariot and performs a Bacchic procession (Spaltenstein 2002: 381), as was the custom with the statue of the god in the festival of the Great Dionysia in Athens (Pausanias 1.38.8). In the cult of Dionysus, covered containers whose contents were known only to the initiates were carried around in connection with the mysteries. A *kiste* (*cista* or *ciste* in Latin) is a round wickerwork basket with a lid. Such objects were also borne on a chariot as in this passage. See Burkert 1985: 99.

32. We see such images on vase paintings from the middle of the fifth century BCE. See Dodds 1960: 177–78. See also Prop. 4.2.31.

33. Visual representations of Cybele's priests wearing *mitrae* abound. Cf. also Cic. *Har. Resp*. 21. 44; Plin. 35.9.35; 58; Juv. 3.66.

34. Servius ad *A*. 4.216: *sane quibus effeminatio crimini dabatur, etiam mitra eis adscribebatur: multa enim lectio mitras proprie meretricum esse docet* (certainly to those whom the offense of effeminacy is attributed, even a *mitra* is ascribed to them: for many a reading teaches that *mitrae* are characteristic of prostitutes). Euripides *Ba*. 927–29: αὐτὰς ἐκείνας εἰσορᾶν δοκῶ σ᾽ ὁρῶν./ἀλλ᾽ ἐξ ἕδρας σοι πλόκαμος ἐξέστηχ᾽ ὅδε,/οὐχ ὡς ἐγώ νιν ὑπὸ μίτρᾳ καθήρμοσα (looking at you, I think that I'm looking at them. But this lock of hair here has come out of its place, not as I fastened it under your *mitra*).

35. In Euripides' time, however, the *mitra* seems to have been worn by both sexes. See Dodds 1960: 177–78.

36. Poortvliet 1991: 159 offers a list of pertinent passages from Verg. *A*. 7. On the importance of this passage in Vergil's *Aeneid*, see Panoussi 2009: 124–33.

37. In E. *Ba*. 835 Pentheus wears a fawn skin and takes up a thyrsus, but in Valerius Thoas himself is not turned into a Bacchant.

38. The text also recalls the fake Bacchic frenzy of Procne in Ov. *Met*. (6.587), which resulted in Philomela's rescue and the destruction of her son Itys and her husband Tereus, on which see chapter 11: 144–45.

39. On the term *Alexandrian footnote*, see Hinds 1998: 1–16.

40. On purification of statues in Greek cult, see Kyriakou 2006: 382, 355, and 381.

41. Parker 1983: 230; 370–74. The fullest account is from AR 4.698–717, obviously relevant for our understanding of Valerius. See also Kyriakou 2006: 335.

42. Spaltenstein 2002: 384–85 points to the similarity of the text to the rite of mock purification in Eur. *IT* 1039–51.

43. The word is used with similar connotations in Verg. *A*. 3.29 during Aeneas' efforts to uproot the tree growing on the tomb of Polydorus.

44. Valerius' commentators (Poortvliet 1991: 164, Spaltenstein 2002: 384–85) point to similar purifications of various gods and goddesses, most notably, to that of Cybele, described later in VF 8.239–40 and in Ov. *F*. 4.337–42.

45. For instance, if Hypsipyle is alone when she leads her father into hiding, then who participates in the chorus mentioned in 2.259 and who sounds the cymbals in 2.260? Are the roaring tigers mentioned in 2.260 real or imaginary, or do they refer to

the temple's sculptures? If Hypsipyle's rites have no audience, then why does the god make her fearsome (*uerendam*, 2.277)? Vergil used a similar technique at the scene of Dido's and Aeneas' supernatural wedding (*A*. 4.166–70), which is significant given Dido's importance as an intertextual model for Hypsipyle.

46. See Poortvliet 1991: 156. Courtney in his 1970 edition follows others in believing that statues of maenads are meant here.

47. See Spaltenstein 2002: 379–80. Compare also Cat. 64.251–64.

48. Her efficiency is also stressed through the narrator's note that she is very careful not to push her luck: VF 2.282–83, *non similes iam ferre choros (semel orgia fallunt) / audet, non paribus furiis accendere saltus* [now she does not dare to perform the same choruses—the rites deceive only once—nor to set the woods ablaze with the same (Bacchic) frenzy]. On the textual problems in 2.283, see Courtney 1965: 154 and Poortvliet 1991: 168.

49. Similar problems have been noted in the case of Eur. *IT* 1204: Why does Iphigeneia ask Thoas to send attendants to shackle the captives Orestes and Pylades? By having these attendants nearby, she puts her own flight and that of the other captives at risk. As in the case of Hypsipyle, however, Iphigeneia's puzzling instructions serve to demonstrate her confidence and complete control of the situation, both resulting from her powerful agency: she is able to deceive Thoas by assuring him she is on his side (πιστὸν Ἑλλὰς οἶδεν οὐδέν, *IT* 1205 [Greece knows nothing about trustworthiness]) and, later, when she disables the attendants by means of her authority as priestess (*IT* 1229–1334).

50. The danger of pollution from Orestes' matricide is not a concern earlier in the play but becomes one in the scenes of Iphigeneia's deception and escape (Kyriakou 2006: 384–85). On incurring pollution by looking upon something polluted, see Eur. *HF* 1231–32, Soph. *OT* 1424–28, among other instances. On the complex notions of pollution where gods are concerned, see Parker 1983: 145–47.

51. Tzanetou 1999–2000: 209–10 argues that in both instances the notion of substitution and compensation is part of a sequence of rites of passage, whereupon Iphigeneia's and Orestes' experiences fall neatly within the pattern identified by Van Gennep (1960): separation (Iphigeneia in Aulis; Orestes in Tauris), transition (Iphigeneia's exile in Tauris; Orestes' mock sacrifice / purification in Tauris), and reintegration (Iphigeneia to Brauron; Orestes to Halai Araphenides).

52. On Pentheus' death as sacrifice, see, e.g. Seaford 1996: 230–40, Segal 1997: 27–54, Foley 1985: 205–18.

53. See Masciadri 2004: 228–31 for a comparison between the actions of Hypsipyle and a mythical account according to which the Pelasgians, having been ousted from Attica and inhabiting Lemnos, abducted Athenian girls from Brauron for revenge. The story was probably an Athenian invention to justify Miltiades' conquest of Lemnos.

54. See Clare 2004: 136–37 on intertextual contact with Vergil that implies contradictory outcomes.

55. On Hypsipyle's connection with Rome, see Vessey 1985: 335. On Hypsipyle as a model Roman woman, see Aricò 1991: 204–205 and Hershkowitz 1998: 136–38. For a detailed study of Hypsipyle in the *Thebaid*, see also Götting 1969.

56. On the funeral rites for Opheltes and their significance for the greater moral and political issues at work in the *Thebaid*, see Ganiban 2013.

57. On Vergil's role, see Nugent 1996, Frings 1996, Casali 2003, Ganiban 2007: 71–95.

58. On Statius' Hypsipyle and Dido, see Dietrich 2004: 7–9, Ganiban 2007: 86–88. Like Hypsipyle, Dido builts a pyre (*pyra penetrali in sede . . . erecta*, *A*. 4.504–05). The burning of Hypsipyle's father's clothes and armor (*sceptrum super armaque patris/ inicio et notas regum uelamina uestes*, *Theb*. 5.314–15) recall Dido's similar placing of Aeneas' clothing on the pyre (*exuuiasque omnis . . . / super imponas*, *A*. 4.496–97, 506–07). A bloody sword is present in both cases (*ense cruentato*, *Theb*. 5.317: compare with *ensemque relictum*, *A*. 4. 507; *ensem cruore/ spumantem*, *A*. 4.664–65). Hypsipyle in her role as "priestess" has her hair loose and thus resembles Vergil's witch, who officiates at Dido's magic rites (*crinis effusa sacerdos*, *A*. 4.509).

59. Keith 2000: 98 reads Hypsipyle's rescue of Thoas in *Theb*. 5 as a crime for which she eventually pays at Nemea with the death of Opheltes.

60. Apollonius here also engages with Homer's *Odyssey* 11. See Kyriakou 1995. On Apollonius and Homer more generally, see Nelis 2005: 356–59.

61. When Jason executes the magic rites after Medea's instructions, he puts on a cloak given him by Hypsipyle (AR 3.1204–06). Hypsipyle's "presence" in Apollonius' text renders the Vergilian passage referring to it relevant for Statius' narrative of her burial rites.

62. On the role of the divine in this episode, see Dominik 1997: 33–41, where he argues that Statius' narrative emphasizes the divine role in human action, thus demonstrating the gods' cruelty and injustice. For a detailed analysis of Polyxo's role, see Finkmann 2015: §§27–47.

63. See also the discussion on Valerius above. The author makes specific mention of the children, calling them "her unlucky companions" (*infelix comitatus*), since maenadism, as we have seen, can be particularly dangerous to male children and indeed will prove so in this case in the very near future.

64. On the alterity of the Lemnian women, see Augoustakis 2010: 49–50.

65. On the women's prayer to Pallas, see Panoussi 2009: 110.

66. As in other maenadic narratives, the negation of marriage is at the heart of the problem here, since Venus punishes the women for neglecting her rites. On a similar problem in the *Aeneid*, see Panoussi 2009: 128–33.

67. See chapter 8. On the links between Hypsipyle and *Theb*. 12, see Augoustakis 2010: 58–61.

68. See Nelis 2005: 362. On Jason as a young hero on the brink of adulthood and the tensions inherent in this representation, see Hunter 1993: 15–25 and 1989: 30–32 on AR 3 in particular.

69. On the imagery of pregnancy and birth from wooden enclosures in *Aeneid* 2, see Putnam 1965: 3–63.

70. See also Bernstein 2015: 142–45 for a more general discussion of fathers in Statius' epic as absent or incompetent.

71. On Statius' use of Euripides' *Hypsipyle* in this episode, see Soerink 2014. On Statius and tragedy more generally, see Heslin 2008, Smolenaars 2008, and Hulls 2014. Bacchus' epiphany is also modeled after the appearance of Venus to Aeneas in *Aeneid* 2, on which see Ganiban 2007: 82–86.

72. Cockle 1987: 40 and Bond 1963: 20. See also Soerink 2014: 177–80.

73. See, for instance, Dunn 1996: 55–57, 92–95. Seaford 1994: 385–88.

74. On Statius' Bacchus as an opposite of Vergil's Venus, see Ganiban 2007: 82–86. On Hypsipyle and Bacchus see also Götting 1969: 13–17.

75. The use of the word *honorem* here is full of interesting connotations: *honor* is used to indicate not only a metaphorical display of honor but also concrete demonstration of it through sacrifice (cf. *A*. 1.49). Bacchus thus implicitly states that the slaughter in which the women engage constitutes unholy sacrifice in the name of Venus, another theme that Roman authors have adopted from the similar practice in Greek tragedy, on which see Panoussi 2009: 13–44.

76. As Ganiban 2007: 84 notes, Hypsipyle's actions following Thoas' rescue occur even as she distrusts Bacchus.

77. On Bacchus' appearance at the conclusion of Hypsipyle's narrative, see Soerink 2014: 178–80, Augoustakis 2010: 57.

78. See Ganiban 2007: 73–75

79. On Hypsipyle as a witness and narrator, see Gervais 2013: 149–56, who argues that intertextuality with Ov. *Met*. and Verg. *A*. complicates her point of view as both victim and perpetrator of violence. See also Nugent 1996, Soerink 2014: 184–86. Gibson 2004 argues that Hypsipyle takes on the role of the epic poet. Most recently, Walter 2014: 208–34 explores Hypsipyle's role as narrator in the *Thebaid* as engaging in dialogue with previous forms of epic narrative but ultimately rejecting them.

80. Gibson 2004: 158 interprets the preceding lines, where Hypsipyle states her name, as a kind of poetic *sphragis* (*hoc memorasse sat est: claro generata Thoante/ seruitium Hypsipyle uestri fero capta Lycurgi*, 5.38–39 [it is enough to mention this: I am Hypsipyle, daughter of famous Thoas, a slave to your Lycurgus]).

81. Extending this analogy, the Seven now assume the role of Dido to Hypsipyle's Aeneas, yet another "feminization" of the male in the text.

82. Nugent 1996 argues that Hypsipyle may have actually killed Thoas.

83. Both poets are writing in the late eighties and early nineties CE (the *Thebaid* was published in 92 CE, and the *Argonautica* had been composed before that), about twenty years after the civil war of 69 CE.

Chapter 13 • Women-Only Rituals in Rome

1. Schultz 2006 argues that women's religious life in Rome was far less circumscribed than most historians believe and that the women's religious contributions were valued by both society and state.

2. See Panoussi 2009: 124–33 and 166–73.

3. On the challenges these sources present, see, e.g., Richlin 2014b: 204–5, who offers an illuminating discussion on Festus ex Paulo, an amalgam of three different sources ranging from the first to the eighth century CE.

4. Richlin 2014b eloquently points this out.

5. See Richlin 2014b. Schultz 2006 makes use of inscriptions; Caldwell 2007, 2014 uses legal texts amid a variety of other evidence.

6. See chapters 3:41 and 9:118. The same is the case for Bona Dea, as will be discussed below, n.11.

7. Female priesthoods were also an important component of women's religious experience in Rome. The importance of the Vestals and the priestess of Ceres is well

documented (Schultz 2006: 140–42). Schultz 2007 and, more recently, DiLuzio 2016: 17–51 have shown the important public duties of the wife of the *flamen dialis*, the *flaminica dialis*. DiLuzio 2016: 52–78 convincingly argues that priestly couples had a far more important role in Republican Roman religion than previously thought.

8. On the goddess's name and the issues associated with it, see Brouwer 1989: 231–45.

9. Brouwer 1989: 240–43. On her connection to fertility, see Versnel 1996: 184, 193, 197. On the goddess and archaic Rome, see Boëls-Janssen 1993: 429–68.

10. See Holleman 1977: 83–84, 90–91, who, in examining Propertius' 4.9, interprets Hercules' sexual encounter with the local goddess Acca Larentia as an instance of *hieros gamos*. Holleman posits that Propertius conflates Bona Dea with Acca Larentia because it suits Augustus' ideological program.

11. Brouwer 1989: 323. As Brouwer notes, a wealth of epigraphical and literary evidence suggests that nonaristocratic women also felt a connection to the goddess. On the special connection of the goddess to married women, see Versnel 1996: 193–97.

12. Brouwer 1989: 240 and, more recently, Schultz 2006: 69.

13. On the festival, see Brouwer 1989: 370–72. On wine drinking at the goddess's cult, see Brouwer 1989: 330–36.

14. Brouwer 1989: 359–63.

15. Brouwer 1989: 363–70 discusses Clodius' infiltration of the mystery rite at Caesar's house.

16. On the importance of the cult of Bona Dea for the prosperity of the state since archaic times, see also Boëls-Janssen 1993: 429–30.

17. Littlewood 2006: 147–48, Boëls-Janssen 1993: 344–45. The only monograph on Mater Matuta is still Halberstadt 1934.

18. See the detailed discussion by Boëls-Janssen 1993: 343–44.

19. For the text of the Sibylline oracle (FGrH 257 F 37) and the *Commentarium* (CIL 6.32323; ILS 5050), as well as commentary, see Pighi 1965. On the *Carmen saeculare*, see Feeney 1998: 32–38.

20. For example, in Prop. 4.8.12 the virgin is carrying a basket; in 4.4.15–16, the virgin Tarpeia, drawing water for a libation, is described as carrying an urn on her head, an image typical for young women in Greek vase painting.

21. On the difficulties presented by Propertius' poem, see Schultz 2006: 22–28, who argues that the military imagery may be the result of Propertius' elegiac concerns with *militia amoris* rather than of an accurate account of the goddess's function and ritual.

Chapter 14 • Spinning Hercules

1. Welch 2004 (reprinted in Welch 2005); Janan 1998a; Janan 2001; Cyrino 1998; Lindheim 1998; Fox 1998; Fox 1999; DeBrohun 1994.

2. On Orientalism in elegy and Propertius in particular, see most recently O'Rourke 2011, who argues that Orientalism is used as a means to display the tensions between East and West. The genre, however, ultimately controls and incorporates this different world within a Western, purely Roman, perspective.

3. On Hercules' ideological importance in early Rome, see Martinez 2009.

4. See Holleman 1977: 88.

5. On Hercules in this instance, see also Holleman 1977: 88, who states that Hercules is a type of sun hero who conquers death and darkness. According to Roman lore, a female partner was required for him to usher in the New Year. A similar, foundational tour occurs in Vergil *A*. 8.306–69, where Evander takes Aeneas through the various important sites of the future Rome. On the Ara Maxima and the temple of Hercules Invictus, see also LTUR III.15–17.

6. Verg. *A*. 8.231. Holleman 1977: 79–80 posits that Cacus' cave was on the northern slope of the Aventine. Other traditions link Cacus with the Palatine (Livy 1.7). On Cacus and the Palatine, see also Platner and Ashby 1929: 465; Richardson 1992: 344.

7. Welch 2004: 68. Holleman 1977: 90 points out that Propertius' description of the *antrum* fits badly with the actual site of the temple and that it probably belonged to a similar proto-Roman deity known as Acca Larentia or Rhea Silvia, and he links it to the Roman new year ritual. Ovid's *Fasti* 5.147–58 focuses on the Bona Dea's temple on the Aventine and Livia's restoration of it. See Herbert-Brown 1994: 131–45. On the temple of Bona Dea Subsaxana see also LTUR I: 200–201.

8. Heracles had already made his entrance in Italy by the sixth century BCE and was embraced as Italic in proto-Rome. See Martinez 2009: 3, 9–13, 121–76.

9. Malkin 1987: 2. On *Graeco ritu*, see Scheid 1995.

10. See for instance, Livy 1.7.3; Macrobius *Sat*. 3.6.17; Servius ad *A*. 8.276. On Evander as the first known inhabitant of Rome, see Fox 1996: 101–103.

11. See Kampen 1996: 235.

12. Kampen 1996: 237. Janan 2001: 128–45 has analyzed Hercules' role as a model of *Romanitas* viewed through the lens of gender. According to Janan 2001, gender and nationality are understood in terms of difference, yet in the end, language cannot provide stability in the definition of either; it only showcases circular definitions.

13. Leitao 1995; Raval 2002: 150–151.

14. Kampen 1996: 243, Raval 2002: 151.

15. Text cited from Wünsch 1898.

16. On the inclusive nature of Roman religion, see, for instance, Takács 2000: 302.

17. Sources attest the success of the *euocatio* ritual, the first known example being the transfer of Juno's cult from Veii to Rome in 396 BCE and the building of the temple of Juno Regina on the Aventine. Livy 5.21.1–7; see also Beard et al. 1998: 34–35.

18. This inclusivity is occasionally tempered by restrictions imposed by the state on imported cults, such as those involving the worship of Cybele or the Bacchic mysteries, especially in the second century BCE. See Beard et al. 1998: 91–98. On Cybele and her castrated priests, see Butler 1998: 243–47.

19. With the exception of Cairns 1992: 83–84, who discusses the poem's affinities with the Homeric hymn to Apollo.

20. Compare Verg. *A*. 8.214, 8.103. Warden 1982: 231–32 points out in great detail the elevating devices that Propertius uses in his poem's opening lines. See also Cairns 1992: 82–84.

21. See Cairns 1992: 87–89. At the same time, the poem privileges patrilineality as definitive of Hercules' identity.

22. Bulloch 1985: 4.

23. See Hutchinson 2006: 218–19; Richardson 1977: 476; Butler and Barber 1933: 374. Hutchinson 2006: 218 states that the reading *Sance* "would without excessive emphasis mark the Greek hero as now an Italian god, and add Callimachean erudition on titles to the final prayer (cf. Call. *Hy.* 3.259)."

24. This is true even though the rites, as we have seen, were performed *Graeco ritu* (see above, n.10). See also Scheid 1995.

25. This is congruent with Augustus' depiction of Hercules, in which the *princeps* follows the example of the Scipios; see Galinsky 1972: 128.

26. To be sure, this inclusivity is tempered by the fact that Hercules excludes women from the worship at the Ara Maxima.

27. See Anderson 1964; Warden 1982; Hutchinson 2006: 205–06; O'Rourke 2011.

28. Panoussi 2010: 52–65.

29. See, for instance, Hutchinson 2006: 210–11 on how specific words in the text highlight the notion of exclusion.

30. Richardson 1977: 473, Janan 2001: 145. On Heracles as "master of waters," see Martinez 2009: 221–22, LIMC IV (1981) 797–98 pl. 1322–1328 s.v. "Herakles at a fountain."

31. Anderson 1964: 7–12; Janan 2001: 145.

32. See also Davies 2006: 115–18 on Hercules' thirst as connected with folktale motifs. According to Davies, Hercules' exploits in this instance cast him as "master of waters."

33. As noted earlier; see Kampen 1996: 237.

34. Davies 2006: 109–10 notes the liminality of Hercules' encounter with the priestess, interpreting it as part of a common folktale pattern whereby the hero meets an ambivalent helper in an area between the normal and the magical worlds. Anderson 1964: 6–7 convincingly makes the case that the lines render Hercules as an elegiac *exclusus amator*. I argue that, additionally, there is a symbolic value to this liminality, which is related to the ambiguity surrounding Hercules' gender in the lines that follow (4.9.47–50).

35. A famous example of cross-dressing as part of rites of passage can be seen in Euripides' Pentheus (*Ba.* 912–76). The problem of the stability of the masculine gender for youths can also be seen in Ov. *Met.* 4.285–388, the story of Salmacis and Hermaphroditus. Although Hercules here is not a youth in the same way as Pentheus, the pattern still holds, as I argue below.

36. Most editors adopt the reading *lucus*: Hutchinson 2006: 51, Richardson 1977: 139, Barber 1960: 161, although Heyworth 2007: 181 prints *murus*.

37. Davies 2006: 109 notes that the poem contains vocabulary stressing the darkness of the grove (4.9.24; 29–30), associating it with the underworld and with Hercules' victory over Cacus. I believe this is also linked to the poem's geographical play between East and West, as the underworld is thought of as in the West: as we have seen, Hercules had previously mentioned first to the priestess his Western/underworld exploits.

38. On the *topos* in Roman literature, see Hinds 1998: 10–16.

39. On Propertius' manipulation of different genres in this poem, see Anderson 1964, Cairns 1992, and DeBrohun 1994.

40. As Anderson 1964: 6–7 notes, the inhabitants of the Bona Dea shrine are called *puellae* instead of *uirgines* (Vestals) or *mulieres* (matrons), who were normally in

the service of the goddess. On the social status of Bona Dea's worshippers, see chapter 13:173.

41. On the relevant bibliography, see above, n.1.

42. On a different interpretation of the importance of Tiresias here, see Janan 2001: 142–45.

43. On Propertian intertextual connections with Callimachus's fifth hymn, see Pillinger 1969 and Hollis 2006.

44. Morrison 2005: 38–43 describes the text's creation of ambiguity around Athena's and Tiresias' gender. Morrison's larger argument is that the ambivalence surrounding their gender results in an uncertainty about the gender of the hymn's narrator and of its projected audience.

45. Morrison 2005: 38–39.

46. See Versnel 1996: 193–98.

47. This permanent submission is evident in the case of Tiresias, who as a result of his encounter with Athena becomes a blind prophet and is thus permanently excluded from the normal male sphere of experience.

48. Welch 2004: 78–80. Schultz 2006: 61–69 has recently argued that women were excluded from the rites of the Ara Maxima but that epigraphic evidence indicates that they were active in the worship of Hercules elsewhere in Republican Rome.

49. On the Romans' acceptance of Cybele, see above, n.18.

50. The importance of Callimachus' text for Propertius has received close attention, most recently by Janan 2001: 142–45 and Welch 2004: 81–82.

51. The issue at stake here is surely that of power, not of instability, as Janan 2001: 142–45 argues.

Chapter 15 • Hercules and the Founding Mothers

1. See, for instance, the work of Miller 1991, Fantham 1992b, 1995a, 1995b, 2002a, 2002b, Herbert-Brown 1994, Newlands 1995, Murgatroyd 2005, King 2006.

2. See Fantham 1995a, 1995b, 2002b, Newlands 1995, Herbert-Brown 1994, Littlewood 2006: xxxv-lii. On the *Fasti* and its value for the study of Roman religion, see Phillips 1992, Scheid 1992b.

3. *Te quoque magnifica, Concordia, dedicat aede/Liuia, quam caro praestitit ipsa uiro./disce tamen, ueniens aetas: ubi Liuia nunc est/porticus immensae tecta fuere domus*, 6.637–40 (and to you also Concordia, Livia dedicates a magnificent shrine, which she herself presents to her dear husband. Nonetheless, coming ages, learn this: where Livia's colonnade stands now, there was once a huge house). See Herbert-Brown 1994: 145–56. On the public image of Livia, see also Purcell 1986. On Livia's image as a new prototype of the Roman *matrona*, see Barchiesi 2006: 104–07.

4. Scholars have long grappled with the relationship between the *Fasti* and the Augustan regime, asking whether it expresses pro- or anti- Augustan views. More recent scholarship, however, sees the issue as more complex and nuanced. Augustan ideology is recognized as a dynamic process, in which the *Fasti* actively participates and presents concerns vis-à-vis the changing political discourse in Rome. See, e.g., Wallace-Hadrill 1987, Feeney 1992, Herbert-Brown 1994, Barchiesi 1997, Newlands 1995, 2000, 2002, King 2006, especially 144–83.

5. On other versions of Ino's story, see Parker 1999: 337–39.

6. On Ovid's sources, see Littlewood 2006: 152–57.

7. On the cult of Mater Matuta, see Halberstadt 1934, Castagnoli 1979, Boëls-Janssen 1993: 341–53, Bettini 1991: 67–99, Smith 2000.

8. See Fantham 1992b, 1995b, 2002b, Parker 1993, 1999, Newlands 2000: 188–202.

9. On the cult of Fortuna Muliebris, see Schultz 2006: 37–44. Newlands 2000: 193–201 offers an excellent analysis of the connections between the episodes of Mater Matuta, Fortuna, and Concordia.

10. Castagnoli 1979, Smith 2000; Littlewood 2006: 148. For an analysis of the archaeological evidence on Hercules, Leucothea, and Palaemon in the Forum Boarium, see Mertens-Horn 1996.

11. This portrayal surely suppresses Ino's past as a wicked stepmother, which is related in *F.* 3.849–76, although Ovid includes reminders of that past in *F.* 6.551–58 and *F.* 6.559–62 as Newlands 2000: 188 argues. See also Murgatroyd 2005: 150–51, who also questions this information, since the narrator is under the inspiration of Bacchus and therefore not a reliable source.

12. On the importance of Evander for the future of Rome, see, e. g., Papaioannou 2003, Panoussi 2010.

13. On Hercules' role in the *Fasti* as a symbol of masculinity and its connections with the poetic *labor*, see King 2006: 109–19.

14. On Bacchus as narrator in this episode, see also Murgatroyd 2005: 57–59. On the Homeric and Hellenistic elements surrounding Bacchus' presence here, see Salvadori 1982: 210–12. See also Miller 1983, who argues that dialogue between the narrator and a divinity is a structural device designed to give unity and variety to the *aitia* presented in the poem. Regarding Bacchus in this instance, Miller notes that the invocation does not immediately result in an epiphany (192n.89). On the narrator in the *Fasti* and the poem's ideological conundrums, see also Newlands 1992.

15. Parker 1999: 337–39 includes other versions of the story, where both Athamas and Ino are driven to madness by Hera. Ino, mad with grief at Learchus' burial, murders her other son, Melicertes, by throwing him into a boiling cauldron and commits suicide by jumping off a cliff, holding the dead Melicertes in her hands. Ovid rewrites her story by erasing these disturbing elements.

16. Compare VF 2.170–71, describing the motion of the frenzied Lemnian women. See also my discussion of the passage and its Bacchic context in chapter 12:148–53.

17. Littlewood 2006: 156 points out that this small *ekphrasis* is a reference to an actual ἡρῷον of Palaemon/Melicertes between Megara and Corinth and on the Isthmian Games founded by Sisyphus of Corinth to honor Palaemon (Paus. 1.44.7). On a comparison between this scene and Ino's jump into the sea in *Met.* 4.525–30, see Salvadori 1982: 213–15.

18. The nexus of associations between burial rites and maenadism is by now familiar. See chapters 4, 7, 8, 12.

19. Compare *Leucothea Grais, Matuta uocabere nostris* (you will be called Leucothea by the Greeks, Matuta by us, 6.545). Littlewood 2006: 166 notes that Ino and Portunus are connected with the sea, as "was appropriate for deities whose shrines were found among the harbour sanctuaries." Note also that the presence of water is another well-known metaphor for rebirth. See the classic discussion by Eliade 1958: 193–96.

20. As Newlands 2000: 191 notes, it is surprising that the Bacchants attack Ino instead of welcoming the nurse of their god. In my view, it makes for strong irony, but it is also a testament to Juno's power that the Bacchants either ignore or disregard this important fact about Ino.

21. I owe this point to Tara Welch.

22. Bömer 1958: 374–75 notes that the phrase *iniciuntque manus* (6.515) has legal connotations as it evokes the practice of *manusiniectio*, a ritual act that had legal force and was accompanied by the use of a ritual formula. *Manusiniectio* or *manuminiectio* (an older term) was used to claim legal possession since the time of the Twelve Tables. It is implied then, that the Bacchants here are abusing this traditional legal/religious procedure.

23. See part 3: Bacchae.

24. See, e.g., Littlewood 2006: 159–60, *et passim*, Parker 1999.

25. Fantham 1992b: 167 in the context of narrative symmetry with *Fasti* 1.

26. See Littlewood 2006: 163–67 with bibliography.

27. As is the case with the rites of the Ara Maxima (see chapter 14:183–86), although Vergil does not explicitly mention the exclusion of women from the rites.

28. Vergil mentions a cow mooing from Cacus' cave and betraying the location of the stolen cattle to Hercules (*A*. 8.217–18).

29. Castagnoli 1979, Mertens-Horn 1997, Smith 2000, Littlewood 2006: 149–51.

30. Smith (2000: 144) adduces further supporting evidence from a *ciste* from Praeneste, outside Rome (fourth to second century BCE), decorated with iconography representing the same combination of deities. There is a strong emphasis on the figure of Hercules, who symbolically represents the male world of valor, while wedding scenes point to the world of women. Menichetti 1995 offers a full discussion of the iconography of the *ciste*. See 1995: 21–52, and esp. 51–52 on the complementarity of the male and female spheres in the images on the *ciste*.

31. To be fair, Ovid had treated the foundation of the Ara Maxima in *F*. 1.543–85.

32. Salvadori 1982: 219–21 argues that Ovid links the two deities in order to show that they both belong to Latium's religious and mythical past.

33. Bömer 1958: 375 notes the allusion to Verg. *A*. 4.173–74. Newlands 2000: 190 reads the lines as indicating that Ino is here dismissing reports of her previous history (narrated in *F*. 3.849–76) and as raising "epistemological questions about the elusiveness of official 'truths' and the special interests of their purveyors. As aspiring deity, Ino does not tell the entire truth about herself; the poet-narrator, however, has filled the reader in."

34. Bömer 1958: 375 and Littlewood 2006: 164 note the passage's intertextual debt to Vergil's Fama (*A*. 4.173–74). On Fama in the *Aeneid* more generally, see most recently Hardie 2012: 78–112. On Fama and maenadism in the *Aeneid*, see Panoussi 2009: 137–38.

35. On Livia, her shrine to Concordia, and their connections with ideals surrounding family life, see Flory 1984.

36. Newlands 2000: 190–91 is right to point out that the following lines (6.563–68) show that the prophecy is misleading, as on that day P. Rutilius Lupus died in 90 BCE during the Social War. Another military commander, T. Didius, fell on the same day "the following year in a massacre that doubled the forces of the enemy" (6.568). Newlands concludes that Matuta "is associated with a period of great divisiveness

within the Italian nation." Once again, the peaceful reciprocity between the women fails to be transmitted into the realm of the men. See Bömer 1958: 376–77 for historical details on Rutilius and Didius.

37. Bömer 1958: 375–76 notes that 6.538 (*fitque sui toto pectore plena dei* [and her whole chest swells with the god]) alludes to the Sibyl's prophecy in Vergil's *Aeneid*. This is another example in which a grim Vergilian prophecy allusively contrasts with Carmentis' positive message. On the Sibyl's prophecy in Vergil, see Panoussi 2009: 138–41.

38. On Aeneas and Pallas in the *Aeneid*, see Putnam 1995: 27–49. On reciprocity, hospitality, and social exchange between Aeneas and Pallas, see Coffee 2009: 99–109.

39. See Harrison 1991: 201–21. On the religious significance of Aeneas' behavior in book 10 and Rome's foundation, see Panoussi 2010: 63–65.

40. On the foundational nature of Aeneas' killing of Turnus and the use of the verb *condere*, see James 1995.

41. For instance, both Propertius 4.9 and the *Fasti* share elements from hymnic poetry, thus connecting poetry with ritual. On Propertius, see the previous chapter: 181–83. On the *Fasti*, see Miller 1980.

42. Parker 1999: 338–39. See also above, n.11.

43. On the institution of asylum and its relationship with Roman identity, see Dench 2005.

Chapter 16 • Dancing in Scyros

1. See, most recently, Heslin 2005: 205–36.

2. Heslin 2005: 147n.92 on Menander's *Epitrepontes* and Terence's *Hecyra*, where rape takes place during a Dionysiac festival at night.

3. See Panoussi 2003: 102–03, 105–06.

4. The girls' performative power also indicates the power of a feminine artistic voice that is pitted against the epic male voice. The role of women reflects not only social tensions but also generic and metapoetic ones, a recurring theme in the texts examined in this book.

5. Dillon 2002: 37.

6. On these ideas about girls, see Panoussi 2003 and chapter 2 on Catullus and marriage rituals.

7. Statius uses the word elsewhere five times (*Silv.* 2.2.8, 3.1.44, 4.2.48; *Theb.* 4.106), but only in the singular.

8. Dilke 2005 (1954): 109.

9. Cf. Prop. 3.14.4 and Ov. *Her.* 16.151–52; see Ripoll and Soubiran 2008: 205.

10. On Thetis, the category of "mother," and the construction of epic genre and epic masculinity, see McAuley 2016: 345–67.

11. I believe that Deidamia is singing epic because she is singing of Achilles' deeds—yet another metapoetic hint in this deeply self-conscious poem. This reversal of sexual performance also corresponds to the generic tensions within the poem between epic and elegy.

12. Heslin 2005: 145: "What is distinctive about Statius' presentation of Achilles' transvestite clumsiness is that, in addition to this typical kind of private display, he puts it on show before a much broader public."

13. On the intertextual canvas of this episode, see also Feeney 2004: 90 and Heslin 2005: 93–101.

14. Thetis' shaping of Achilles into a girl (1.325–37) is yet another example of the performative notion of gender operative in the *Achilleid*, as well as its explicit correlation with artistic creation. On the latter, see Hinds 1998: 138–40. It is also relevant in the poem's articulation of tensions between the genres of epic and elegy. Achilles here is analogous to the elegiac *seruus amoris* ("slave of love"), who forgoes male duties in order to be with his girl (*puella*).

15. Heslin 2005: 147: "Ulysses apparently intends this as an ambiguous token of his potential interest in Lycomedes' daughters."

16. On the public aspect of the Bacchic *orgia* and the private/exclusive character of the rites in 1.593 (forbidden to men, 1.603), see Heslin 2005: 148.

17. On transgressive, monstrous female figures in Statius' *Thebaid*, see Keith 2013.

18. Compare e.g. the image of the pregnant Hippolyte in Theseus' triumphal procession in the *Thebaid*: *Hippolyte, iam blanda genas patiensque mariti/foederis*, 12.534–35 [Hippolyte, now bland of eye and patient of the marriage bond]. As Augoustakis 2010: 79 observes, "although the Amazons still remain fierce and do not show any signs of weakness (such as lament . . .), . . . their queen seems subdued." On Theseus as the king who imposes civilization (in this case, on the barbarian Amazons), see Augoustakis 2010: 78 n.111 for further bibliography, and Bessone 2013.

19. Hinds 2000: 239 argues that the girls' femininity is compromised by their absorption of the cross-dressed Achilles. See also Heslin 2005: 153, who compares their transgressive participation in the banquet to the behavior of Amazons: "If we consider that the women at this banquet are not *matronae* associating with friends and family, but unmarried girls reclining in the company of male strangers, then we may begin to understand how odd and outrageous their behavior here is—like Amazons, indeed."

20. Hinds 2000: 239–40 notes that the image of the Amazons occurs at a moment when they are temporarily dissociated from their weaponry. Yet I believe the texts' reference to their previous battle and plundering (*Scythicas rapuere domos et capta Getarum/moenia*, 1.759–60) evokes and stresses their dangerous potential as warriors and conquerors.

21. On the Amazons as creating the possibility for Achilles' manifestation, see Feeney 2004: 95. On Deidamia's protective gaze and her surveillance of Achilles, see Heslin 2005: 154–55: "Statius represents womanliness as a performative construct, not just for transvestites, but for women, too" (155).

22. Cf. Plu. *Thes*. 36. I believe that there is a layer of political and ideological implications in Statius' connection between Scyros and Athens and, by extension, its empire. Given the poem's address to Domitian, these connections would obviously pertain to Rome. On the transfer of empires from the East to the West, see Augoustakis 2016.

23. Hinds 2000: 237 correctly notes that the girls revise Pallas in this scene by making her more feminine. Yet the subsequent comparison of Deidamia with Diana furthers the connection between virginity and rather masculine pursuits.

24. On maenadism in Greek myth and cult, the Bacchic mysteries in Rome, and their connection with the poem, see Heslin 2005: 243–51.

25. On the passage's mobilization of the intertext of Euripides' *Bacchae*, see Heslin 2005: 253–55.

26. The image of powerful individuals at moments when they have laid aside their weapons is recalled in the description of the girls as Amazons during Lycomedes' banquet. It encapsulates the ambiguity of feminine power—both threatening and nonthreatening at the same time. See Heslin (2005: 256): "The adoption of male roles by women makes maenadism well suited to being the ironic backdrop for Achilles' symmetrically opposite gender inversion." For a different view, see Hinds 2000.

27. Heslin 2005: 253 n.61 notes, "Statius leaves it for us to decide whether Deidamia cries out of pleasure or terror."

28. Analyzed by Heslin 2005: 232–36 as an initiation ritual.

29. See Heslin 2005: 233–34, 257–61 on the role of the Magna Mater and the Curetes/Corybantes. On the Magna Mater elsewhere in Flavian epic, see Fucecchi 2013 and Chinn 2013. Chinn also offers an extensive discussion of the role of Cybele, the Curetes, the Corybantes, and Orphic ritual in general in the *Thebaid*, an important intertext for this passage.

30. The power of their sexuality is also analyzed by Heslin 2005: 145–47, who notes instances of rape during dancing elsewhere in literature.

31. Heslin 2005: 234–35 and n.166 also notes that the Amazonian dance (*pectine Amazonio*) is otherwise unknown. This is yet another element supporting the importance of the Amazonian motif in the portrayal of the girls of Scyros.

32. Augoustakis 2016: 200 observes: "Through his own cross-dressing and the impregnation of Deidamia, marked in the text as a violent attack, Achilles comes of age on the liminally *other* island of Scyros by replicating Paris' . . . kidnapping of the queen of Sparta. Therefore, the 'European' Achilles incorporates both the effeminate traits of the East and the warlike manliness of the West, but also he ultimately embodies the 'Asian' *other*, which he is destined to overcome and annihilate by sacrificing his own life."

33. The previous observations can also be used to help frame questions regarding the generic tensions within the *Achilleid*, since the girls' role can be said to articulate an alternative mode of expression that complicates the poem's other generic voices, elegiac and epic. In other words, the transgressive girls match the transgressive character of the poem.

34. As a prequel to the first epic, the *Achilleid* constitutes a type of foundational narrative in a poetic context.

Epilogue • Tacita's Rites and the Story of Lara in Ovid's Fasti *2*

1. For a thorough discussion of the episode, see Robinson 2011: 355–90. Feeney 1992: 12 argues that Lara's story pertains to the larger preoccupation of the *Fasti* with issues of *libertas* and the regulation of speech; Newlands 1995: 160–61 points to the link between sexual violence and the power of divine and political authority to restrict speech; Miller 1991: 105–07 notes that the description of the ritual is rather informal and rife with humorous elements.

2. On the text's affinity with Vergil's *A*. 12, see Robinson 2011: 374–75 (with bibliography), and *passim* 375–90.

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